

EPIC INDIA

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India as Described in the Mahabharata and
the Ramayana

VAIDYA C.V.

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PREFACE.

In this volume is placed before the reader, the third and the last instalment of my views on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, as contemplated in the preface to my first book "The Mahabharata: a criticism." I have called this book by the name of Epic India as it attempts to describe the social, political, intellectual and religious condition of the country during the epic period, from such information as is available to us in these two epics. I have also laid under contribution for corroborative evidence, the Upanishads on the one hand, composed as they were about the beginning of that period and Manusmriti and the writings of Megasthenes and other Greek authors which belong to its end. The epic period, according to my view, extends roughly speaking, from 3000 to 300 B. C. as the Mahabharata war was in my opinion fought in 3101 B. C. the original Bharata being composed not very long after that event; and the Mahabharata was last recast about 250 B. C. at least unquestionably after Megasthenes and before Ashoka. If we take the latest dates assigned to these events viz., the Mahabharata war and the last recasting of the Mahabharata the epic period still extends over about a thousand years from 1200 to 200 B. C.

In arriving at my views about the condition of India in this period, I have tried as far as possible to avoid two tendencies, the tendency on the one hand so natural to many native scholars, to look upon the least deviation from accepted ideas as monstrous, and the tendency on the other hand so unaccountably observable among many European scholars to look upon every thing written by the Brahmins as suspicious and even untrue. How far I have succeeded in steering clear of these Scylla and Charybdis of Indian antiquarians, it is for the reader to judge.

In this book I have thrown all the Sanskrit quotations into foot-notes and given their translation where necessary in the body of the book. Names again have always been given in English characters; but they have also been shown in Devanagari characters in brackets where necessary to ensure proper pronunciation. The appending of a map and an Index may lastly be noticed and will be found useful.

Now that the task which I had laid before myself is over, I can not conclude without expressing my deep sense of gratitude to His Highness the Maharajah Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, but for whose encouragement and princely support I could not have placed before the public, the results (of such value as they may possess) of my study of the two venerable epics of India.

Bombay, December 1907.

C. V. VAIDYA.

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EPIC INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

RACE.

THE anthropometrical labours of Sir H. Risley in connection with the last census report of India for 1901 have dispelled for all time to come the doubt which was often entertained as to whether there was any Aryan population at all in this vast country of diverse races. We are now assured that language and literature have not deceived us so long ; that philologists have not in vain, by their labours of the last century, classed the Sanskrit with the Persian, the Greek, the Latin, the German and the Scandinavian language as a member of the same family group of languages ; that the students of the Rigveda, the oldest hymn-book in the world, have not created a myth of their own, when they discovered in it the traces of an Aryan people entering India through the north-west and conquering the Punjab. In fact theories like that of Mr. Nesfield which denied the truth of the "modern doctrine which divided the population of India into Aryan and aboriginal" and which saw no difference in race and blood between the "high class students" of the Sanskrit College at Benares and "the scavengers

who swept the road" have been set at rest for ever. That most valuable chapter which Sir H. Risley has contributed to the census report of India for 1901 on caste, tribe and race has shown conclusively from anthropometrical measurements taken throughout India that the population of India does contain a very large Aryan element. He divides India into seven compartments one of which comprising the Punjab, Kashmere and Rajputana is almost wholly populated by the Indo-Aryan race. The next compartment as shown in his map comprises a large part of the present United Provinces and Bihar and contains a population which he looks upon as Aryo-Dravidian or a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian races. In lower Bengal and Orissa there is a Mongolo-Dravidian population, "probably a blend of Dravidian and Mongolian elements with a strain of Indo-Aryan blood in the higher groups." Fourthly comes the Dravidian type "which extends from Ceylon to the valley of the Ganges and pervades the whole of the Madras Presidency, Hyderabad, the Central Provinces, most of Central India and Chota Nagpur. Fifthly and lastly come the western portions of India including Gujarat, the Maharashtra and the country lower down as far as Coorg and containing, according to Sir H. Risley, a population which is a mixture of Scythian and Dravidian elements. These together with the Turko-Iranian population in Baluchistan and the north-west frontier province and the pure Mongolian people of Nepal, Assam and Burma form the very interesting and scientific sevenfold division of the peoples of India based on anthropometrical measurements,

a division which has been provisionally proposed by Sir H. Risley and which, as he says, will greatly assist the future ethnographical survey of India. How accurately and almost wonderfully these conclusions, except in one case *viz.*, the Scytho-Dravidian population of western India, coincide with the conclusions which can be derived not only from the Rigveda (which is not the subject of our book) but also from the two venerable Epics of India, it is our purpose to show in this chapter.

About 4,000 years before Christ, according to the latest researches of Mr. Tilak, the Indo-Aryans separating from their brethren the Iranians came into the Punjab through the north-western Khyber pass, the usual gateway of India, and found therein their promised land of abode. They doubtless had traditions, faint yet fascinating, of their Arctic home or home in cold climes which they were compelled to abandon in consequence of a change in the climate due to the last glacial period on this earth which must have closed at about 8,000 B. C. Convinced of the importance of the Sun and Fire, the Indo-Aryans came into a hot land watered by five or seven rivers. Thus is the region described in that historically valuable passage in the Vedidad, the proper importance and bearing of which it fell to the credit of Mr. Tilak to bring to the notice of the world. One section of the Aryans who left the Ariana Vaejo or the ancient Aryan home took up their abode in the Sapta-Sindha; but Aingra Mainyu, the devil, as the passage says, created excessive heat and untimely evils to trouble them there. That is a description which undoubtedly

applies well to the Punjab, which with its five rivers between the Indus and the Sarasvati might well be called the Sapta-Sindha and we have thus the traditions of the Rigveda confirmed by the Zend Avesta that the Indo-Aryans came into the Punjab from the north-west. It is a circumstance of singular importance that the Punjab was the first abode of the Indo-Aryans and that after the lapse of about 6,000 years it still continues to be the land *par excellence* of the Indo-Aryans in India. We are irresistibly led to conclude that the aboriginal population which opposed the first inrush of the Indo-Aryans in the Punjab either died out completely very soon after the immigration or receded southwards. The Vedas usually speak of the noseless Dasyus or aborigines, and it seems probable that these aborigines were Dravidians whose chief characteristic, even the late census Commissioner, Sir H. Risley, takes to be their flat noses as shown by their large nasal index. The whole of India appears, therefore, to have been inhabited thickly or sparsely by tribes belonging to the Dravidian race, differing among themselves in degree of civilization and ferocity of character. The aboriginal population of the Punjab appears not to have offered much resistance and was probably very sparse. The whole province, therefore, was soon rid of the aborigines and was taken possession of entirely by the Indo-Aryans. The extreme fertility of the Punjab and its salubrious climate favoured the growth of population and during the period of about 1,000 years *i.e.*, by 3,000 B. C. with which date our review commences, the whole

of the Punjab was probably peopled by a population which was entirely Indo-Aryan. The Vedas speak of the Bharatas as the chief race of the Punjab and it is not strange that the Punjab and latterly the whole of India came to be called by the name of the land of the Bharatas.

It is impossible to suppose that during all this time the Aryans remained content with the Punjab or Kashmere which must have attracted them in the very beginning. Although the generality might be supposed to be too lazy to leave a rich province, the more enterprising and restless spirits must have sought fresh lands for habitation and conquest ; and the country along the Himalayas eastward was as fertile and healthy as the Punjab if not more so. Rohilkhand, Oude and Bihar were probably soon conquered and peopled by the Aryans ; and the Kurus and the Panchalas, the Kosalas and the Videhas were the favourite peoples of whom the Brahmanas delight to speak. The older kingdoms had become naturally old-fashioned by this date, and the centre of refinement and attraction moved down from the Punjab to the centre of the United Provinces. The new kingdoms, however, kept up their relations with the older kingdoms, and there was very little difference between them so far as race and blood, language and religion were concerned.

Anthropologists have not yet agreed as to what stock the various Dravidian races of India belong. As Sir H. Risley has pointed out, there is a most astounding divergence of opinion among anthropologists. Fowler classes the Dravidians of India

and the Veddahs of Ceylon under the Melanochroi Caucasians along with the greater part of the inhabitants of southern Europe. "It is difficult not to distrust a classification which brings together people of such widely different appearance, history and traditions as the Greeks and the Italians and the black broad-nosed Dravidians of central and southern India." Paschal treats the Dravidians as people of "uncertain origin." A more acceptable opinion appears to us to be that of Huxley who "treats them as Australioid." It seems probable that the aboriginal Dravidians of India were a tropical people who extended into the continent of India from the south. We have already shown in our book on the Ramayana that the Yakshas and the Rakshasas were originally a people who lived on the sea-coast. It is, therefore, natural to expect that when the Indo-Aryans pressed them from the north they receded towards their original home in the south. The new settlements of the Aryans between the Ganges and the Himalayas drove the Dravidians towards the south and were themselves not much mixed with the Dravidians but remained as pure in blood as their brethren in the Punjab.

At this point, say about 500 years after the occupation of the Punjab, or about 3500 B. C. opens the story of Rama as it can be gleaned and gathered from the now extant and entirely changed version of the Ramayana. The Punjab was peopled by the Aryans, as also were Rohilkhand, Oude and Bihar. A few of the Dravidians still lingered on the northern bank of the Ganges; but the

most repellant of them, from the Aryan point of view, were now to the south of that river from Central India downwards. For we find from the Ramayana as has been already shown in our second book that there was a Guha or Nishada king on the northern bank of the Ganges who was a friend of the sun-race of Ayodhya. Between the Jumna and the Ganges the country was waste and but sparsely inhabited. To the south of the Ganges and the Jumna extended the Dravidian races some of whom were ferocious cannibals. The ancestors of Rama had explored the Gangetic valley completely, and brought the people there under Aryan influence. Adventurous Aryans had also penetrated as far south as the Godavari. The greater part of Rajputana and the entire west of India was unknown to the Aryans and was probably sparsely peopled by Dravidian races. The Aryans had probably already sailed down the Indus and brought modern Sindh under influence. In the adjoined map, we show India as it must have been known in the days of Rama.

The Rigveda was by this time already completed and had attained sanctity as a revelation. It speaks of the Yatus or Yatudhanas or Rakshas as they are called therein. Even in their conquest of the Punjab and the upper Gangetic valley the Aryans must have sometimes come in contact with fierce cannibalic Dravidian races who were no doubt eventually driven across the Ganges; for the Rigveda contains expressions which indicate the feelings of abhorrence or fear with which the Aryans regarded such people. "God

make the devourers sonless" was their prayer. Vasishtha declares that "if one calls him who is not a Yatu or cannibal by the name of Yatudhana or a cannibal, that one is as much damned as one who calls a cannibal as not a cannibal." In fact Yatu had grown into a term of abuse or imprecation even in Vedic times. The south was full of such cannibals; and adventurous Brahmins and exiled princes fared even in Vedic days to the Dakshinapatha to fight with these dreadful people. Rigveda X, 61,6 contains, according to Prof. Rhys Davids, a reference to a prince exiled to the south and we may well believe that Rama was exiled to the south as a matter of course; and like a bold and adventurous Aryan prince he plunged deep into it in order to reclaim it from its dreaded inhabitants.

The Central Provinces have always, except within the last few years, been full of jungle and could never have been thickly populated. Aryan adventurers, especially Brahmins, had, therefore, found it possible to plant colonies in those Provinces, only at suitable places, though they were frequently infested by the Rakshasas. Rama visited all those colonies, and by the advice of Agastya, to whom mythology ascribes the credit of being the first to cross the Vindhya range, took up his abode on the banks of the Godavari which was the limit of Aryan influence up to his time. One may well believe that the rich and fertile plain country to the south of that river was even at that date teaming with a Dravidian population and that some of its peoples evinced strong cannibalistic tendencies. They were doubtless in a low state of civilization

and knew not the use of the bow and the arrow, the great weapon of the Aryans of India for centuries. We need not repeat here the story of Rama's adventurous yet successful march to Lanka and back as we have given it in detail elsewhere. We do not doubt its truth; nor is it possible to urge that that exploit, having led to no result (for the south really remained a sealed book to the Aryans for centuries afterwards) is purely imaginary. Nobody questions the truth of Alexander's march to the Punjab, even though western nations did not repeat his attempt till 2000 years later. Rama's adventure which gave a glimpse of the south to the Aryans did not for a long time lead to any conquest by the Aryans because the south which was the stronghold of the Dravidian races was more thickly populated and was inhabited by stronger races than the north. The Dravidian people of the south, however, soon gave up cannibalism after the fall of its greatest stronghold in Lanka, and easily assimilating the Aryan civilization under the tutelage of a few Brahmin leaders, became orthodox Hindus in the course of succeeding centuries. The religious dominion of the Brahmins over the Dravidian people became in course of time most rigid and despotic, and continues to be so down to this day.

For a long time, however, the south remained almost a "terra incognita" to the Aryans in spite of Rama's successful expedition to Lanka. For it is noteworthy that the Ramayana of Valmiki discloses a lamentable ignorance of the geography of the south (except in that geographical interpolation in the Kishkindhakanda on which we

have commented at length in our second book). While the journey of Bharata from Ayodhya to his uncle's kingdom somewhere in the Punjab is described in the Ramayana with a multitude of details as to the intervening places, Rama's journey to the south is distressingly meagre of detail. We have no doubt a good description of the route from Ayodhya to Chitrakuta where Rama first takes up his abode ; but from Chitrakuta to Panchavati on the Godavari where he next lives and from there to Lanka or Ceylon, very few places on the way are mentioned. No mention is made of the Nerbudda which Rama seems, therefore, to have crossed somewhere near its source. But it is remarkable that even the Kistna and the Cauveri are not mentioned at all as having been crossed. Probably by a mistake similar to that of the Greeks under Alexander who looked upon the Hindukush and the Himalayas as a continuation of the Caucasus, Valmiki and the Aryans in Rama's time looked upon the hills of Travancore and the Malaya hill as off-shoots of the Vindhya range. In short, the Aryans marked no places and gave no names to rivers and mountains in the south in Rama's time and knew only the Godavari and the Vindhya mountains. We must here draw the attention of the reader to the fact that up to this time there was very little or no intermarriage whatever between Aryans and non-Aryans. Indeed, the circumstances were entirely opposed to such crossing. The fair Aryans with their prominent noses and tall statures were not to be captivated by the black, noseless and stunted Dravidians nor did they feel the need for such ill-assorted unions as the Aryan popu-

lation in the Punjab could supply Aryan wives to those adventurers who had spread into the upper Gangetic valley. The pride of blood again was already so far advanced as to discountenance all such marriages. It is, therefore, impossible to suppose that the Aryans of the Punjab and the upper Gangetic valley could have allowed their blood to mix with the lower Dravidian race to any large extent.

How is it then that the present population of the United Provinces and Bihar is Aryo-Dravidian? Sir H. Risley accepts the ingenious theory first propounded by Dr. Hoernle and latterly supported on linguistic considerations by Dr. Grierson. It is supposed that a second wave of invasion by the Aryan speaking people took place after the first had taken possession of and peopled the Punjab. This second invasion did not come in by the usual north-west gate, but by the circuitous way via Gilgit and Chitral. Owing to the difficulties of the road, the invaders necessarily took with them very few women and were compelled to take to wife the women of the Dravidian races who inhabited the land. And thus an Aryo-Dravidian population sprang into existence and spread over the valley of the Ganges and the Jumna. It is further supposed that the caste system originated among these people; the Vedas were composed and tortuous ritual was developed by them. This theory suggested by philological and linguistic considerations has been completely supported by anthropometrical measurements and, Sir H. Risley adds, it further accounts "for the antagonism between the eastern and western sections of the Aryans and for the fact that the latter are regarded as com-

parative barbarians by the more cultured inhabitants of the middle land."

While some of these statements cannot, in our opinion, be accepted, the theory of a second Aryan invasion of India as sketched above seems to us to be supported not only by the evidence of philology and anthropometry, but by the evidence of the great epic of India, the Mahabharata. Caste, as we shall show in the next chapter, had no doubt already developed in the Punjab; the hymns of the Rigveda had already been compiled, for their composers knew not the Gangetic valley at all and knew only the rivers of the Punjab and Afganistan; the antagonism between the eastern Aryans and the Aryans of the Punjab had not yet arisen and can be explained on other grounds. As we have already shown from the evidence of the Ramayana, the Aryans of the Punjab had already overgrown their limits and spread between the Ganges and the Himalayas as far down as Bihar. To quote from Dutta, the Aitareya Brahmana speaks of the sacrificial fire having gone from the Punjab as far east as the river Gundaki and of the reclamation of Bihar into a fertile province under the Videhas. But the Aryans of the east were then on good terms with the Aryans of the Punjab, and usually married their fair daughters. These things as stated in the new theory by Sir H. Risley are not true. But as we have already shown the intermixture of races in the United Provinces cannot be explained except on the supposition put forward by Dr. Hoernle and accepted by Sir H. Risley that there was a second invasion by new Aryan races who having very few women with them did not

scruple to take to wife the women of the aboriginal Dravidian races. And we find ample evidence in the Mahabharata of a fresh invasion of India by such Aryans about 3200 B. C.

There are many incidents in the life of the Pandavas as described in the Mahabharata which evidence the truth of a second invasion by peoples akin in race, language and religion to the Aryans who had already established themselves in the Punjab and spread eastward along the foot of the Himalayas. They were no doubt less advanced in civilization but were naturally stronger in frame, freer in spirit and sturdier in character. The Pandavas are shown in the Mahabharata to have been brought down from the Himalayas by their mother accompanied by Brahmins. They were born in the Himalayas of parents who were different from the inhabitants of the plain and they were bred among Himalayan Brahmins somewhere to the north of Hastinapur. When they came to that city of the Kurus they were looked upon as intruders and for a long time they failed to gain admission to the rights of the princes of the country. Dhritarashtra tried to get rid of them somehow, but they succeeded by their energy in avoiding disaster, and won the beautiful daughter of the king of the Panchalas. Now we come here upon a shloka in the Mahabharata which is of the greatest significance in this connection. When the five brothers proposed to wed the same princess, Drupada was amazed. But Yudhishthira said "This is our family custom and we do not feel we are transgressing Dharma in following it." It is a sentence which we purposely

left uncommented in our first book (*Mahabharata: a Criticism*, page 123). It is a sentence which clearly shows that Yudhishtira is speaking of a family which is not the family of Duryodhana and the Kurus. For nowhere is it stated or does it otherwise appear that in that family there were instances of polyandry. That sentence so strangely preserved from the old nucleus of the *Mahabharata* clearly establishes two things: 1st that the Pandavas belonged to a family which was different from the Kuru family, and the antecedents and customs of which Yudhishtira knew full well; 2ndly that in that family the custom of polyandry prevailed, a custom which is usually found among people who are not in possession of a sufficiently large number of women. Even now the custom of several brothers marrying one woman survives among many people of the Himalayan region, and can be explained on the supposition that in that cold clime mortality among women is greater than among men. However that may be, the coming of the Pandavas from the Himalayas and their marrying the same princess on the ground that it was their family custom lends great support to the theory of an Aryan invasion coming from the Himalayas, and of the invaders having brought few women with them.

They did not come in as regular invaders bent upon conquest but as kindred races wishing to enjoy the opportunities which the country afforded, in equal degree with their brethern previously settled upon the soil. It is a fact of great significance that Dhritarashtra who at first tried to reject the invaders consented at last to divide the kingdom with them,

But in doing so he gave them the basin of the Jumna and reserved the Gangetic plain which his clan had long occupied before, to his sons. He alleged that the Pandavas were powerful enough to bring under settlement that part of the country which was lying waste. This is exactly what we should expect to happen. The fresh comers would be sent further southwards and westwards. We have seen from the Ramayana that the valley of the Jumna was entirely in the possession of the Dravidian races some of whom were cannibals, and was but sparsely peopled even by them. The new settlers would be asked to reclaim exactly such land.

The Pandavas were, however, not unwilling or incapable of reclaiming new lands from jungles and jungly aborigines. Bold in conception and execution and endowed with the spirit and the unscrupulousness of new settlers they resolved to put the jungle to the flames. The dire conflagration (transformed in later mythology into a sacrifice to propitiate the hungry god of fire as we have shown in our first book) raged for several days and thousands of animals and aborigines were ruthlessly destroyed in the fire. Takshaka the king of the Nagas an aboriginal race, escaped with some adherents and becoming a deadly enemy of the new settlers wreaked his vengeance on the successor of the Pandavas. The new country, however, soon grew into a rich and prosperous kingdom under the rule of the energetic Pandavas and its capital called Indraprastha figures throughout Indian history as Delhi, the capital of the empire.

The Pandavas were not the only people who thus newly came and settled into lands reclaimed for the

first time in the valley of the Jumna. Kindred races came along with them or had similarly come before and been pushed down towards the Jumna by the Aryans already in the possession of the country north of the Ganges. We have mention of many such tribes in the Mahabharata itself. At the head of them stood the Shauraseni people who settled in Mathura. Krishna, the grandson of Shurasena, the first founder of the kingdom, was a great friend and relative of the Pandavas, and was their chief adviser and supporter in the conflagration of the Khandava forest and the founding of Indraprastha on the banks of the Jumna. He, too, had to fight with an aboriginal Naga king and to destroy him. The story of Krishna having killed the Kaliya serpent in the Jumna seems to us to contain the historical fact of a human Naga king having been destroyed on the Jumna by Krishna. The black aboriginal king of the Naga people might well have been transformed in later legend into a veritable seven-headed serpent which haunted a deep pool of the river. Still further down we have the story of the founding of the Chedi kingdom between the Ganges and the Jumna by a kindred race, under Vasu or king Uparichara (chapter 63 Mahabharata I); and his five sons again founded different kingdoms the first of them Brihadratha founding the Magadha kingdom further east on the southern banks of the Ganges. Another son called Matsya born of a fish founded the Matsya kingdom of Virata. The Kunti bhojas were another race allied to the Yādavas who settled in a part of the country further southwards probably along the Chambal. When Krishna was

threatened with an invasion from Magadha in consequence of his having killed Kansa he and his adherents set out for new lands and founded Dwaraka on the coast of the ocean in the country of Saurashtra. It is in fact clear that the new races in the course of a few centuries, as we may take it, occupied the country which is now represented by Cutch, Kathiawar, Malwa, Gwalior and the Doab. In Malwa the new people founded the city of Ujjain which to this day continues to be one of the most sacred cities of India. In Ajmere and Pushkara, an oasis in the desert land of modern Rajputana which must have attracted the attention of the invading Aryans in their stream of settlements southwards, we have another place which is to this day one of the holiest spots of all India.

These new races the Pandavas, the Surasenas, the Yadavas, the Kunti-Bhojas, the Dasharnas, the Matsyas, the Magadhas and others mentioned in the Mahabharata were all characterized by lax marriage customs, as can be proved from the Mahabharata itself. The origin of the Pandavas is undoubtedly obscure and so is that of Krishna. Krishna is said to have married 16 thousand wives who cannot all have been Aryans. Draupadi married by the Pandavas was herself of uncertain origin. The origin of the Matsyas is said in the Mahabharata to have been a fish. Probably it was a fisherwoman or a Nishadi who was the mother of the race. Shantanu is said to have actually married a fisherman's daughter and Vichitravirya, the grandfather of the Pandavas, was born of her. She was also the mother of Vyasa, the author of the

original epic, and had that child born to her from Parashara. These and similar other stories go to show that the new races of Aryan invaders were not at all strict in their marriage connections and freely took to wife the women of the aboriginal races. A mixture of Aryan and Dravidian blood must soon have taken place with the result that the colour of the Aryan people soon underwent a change. The extremely severe heat of the new regions settled would also contribute to the same result and strangely enough we find black colour coming into favour with the Aryan people at this time. It is a strange coincidence that Krishna is represented in the Mahabharata as black and so is Arjuna, the Pandava who is pre-eminently Krishna's friend and follower; so is also Vyasa who has related that story and so is Krishnâ, the wife of the Pandavas. It is a coincidence which is not accidental and which clearly shows that the two races, the Aryans and the Dravidians, had mixed up considerably at the time of the Mahabharata war.

Whether in consequence of this mixture of races or of the great prosperity to which the new kingdoms attained on the banks of the Jumna and the Chambal or in Gujarat and Malwa it is nevertheless certain that the cupidity of the older Aryans who were settled to the north of the Ganges was aroused and they strove to gain supremacy on lands which they themselves had given to the new comers and which either through fear of the aborigines or through incapacity to reclaim new lands they had neglected to cultivate. We find in the war between the Kurus and the Pândavas the struggle for supre-

macy which the older Aryans made against the fresh comers *viz.*, the new Aryans and their mixed progeny. The Mahabharata war was, as we have said elsewhere, something like a civil war between the pure Aryans and the mixed Aryans. The former who occupied the country between the Ganges and the Himalayas and who still kept up their marriage relations with the Aryans of the Punjab were supported in this conflict by these brethren of theirs. The new Aryans were supported by those people who formed the mixed races and by their Dravidian relations. It was in fact a counterpart of the civil war of America, the local Americans fighting against those Englishmen who tried to rule America from England and to continue England's supremacy in America. If we scan the nature of the peoples who fought on the side of the Pândavas and of the Kauravas we shall find that they represented two opposite sides *viz.*, the pure Aryans and the mixed Aryans.* The struggle ended in favour of

* From Udyogaparva chapter 19 we find that the following peoples were ranged on the two sides.

Duryodhana.

- 1 Shalya (Punjab.)
- 2 Bhagadatta (China Kirata)
- 3 Bhurishrava (Punjab).
- 4 Kritavarma (Bhoja and Andhakukur from mountains).
- 5 Jayadratha (Sindh.)
- 6 Sudakshina (Kamboja with Yavana and Shaka).
- 7 Nila of Mahishmati (with Deccanis).
- 8-9 The two kings of Avanti.
- 10 Kekaya (Punjab).
- 11 Minor kings.

Yudhishthira.

- 1 Yuyudhana Sattwata (Kathiawar or Mathura).
- 2 Dhrishtaketu of Chedis (Cawnpore).
- 3 Jayatsena of Magadha
- 4 Pândya (with seacoast people of Madras).
- 5 Drupada (Agra and Aligarh)
- 6 Virata of Matsya with hilly people (Dholpur and Bharatpur).
- 7 Minor kings

If we omit Nila of Mahishmati and Pândya of the seacoast

the mixed Aryans and the old capital of Hastinapur was taken possession of by the Pandavas. We take it that the whole of the older provinces fell under the sway of the mixed Aryans of the new race though some people to the north of the Ganges might still have preserved their purity and their independence.

The Pandavas placed on the throne of Hastinapura Parikshita, the grandson of Arjuna by his wife Subhadra the sister of Krishna, and Vajra, a grandson of Krishna, on the throne of Indraprastha. Parikshita's son Janamejaya was a great sovereign, as is so often the characteristic of the second successor of the founder of a kingdom. What Akbar was in relation to Babar or Shahu in relation to Shivaji, Janamejaya may be said to have been in relation to the Pandavas, the founders of the kingdom of Indraprastha. He was already master of the valleys of the Jumna and the Ganges and the Mahabharata relates that he conquered the Punjab or the country of Takshashila. He is spoken of in many Brahmanas and Upanishads, which were being composed at this time, as a great king and a great sacrificer. It seems from the Mahabharata that that poem was also originally sung during the intervals of a sacrifice which Janamejaya performed in commemoration of the war of extermination which he waged against his hereditary enemies the Nagas. We take his time to be roughly 3000 B. C. and believe that the great epic was then

on either side as having no existence in those days we may look upon the Mahabharata fight as a fight between the Northern and the Southern or in other words between the pure and the mixed Aryans. Of course the Yavanas and Shakas are added to the Kambojas in an anachronous manner.

born. It grew for centuries thereafter until it assumed its final shape after the rise of Buddhism and the conquest of the Punjab by Alexander in 327 B. C. The present Mahabharata thus furnishes us with evidence of the condition of India between 3000 and 300 B. C. a period to which we assign the name of the epic period.* At the beginning of the epic period then the state of India as far as race is concerned was as follows. There was a pure Aryan population in the Punjab consisting of several kingdoms, nominally subordinate to the power of the Pandavas in Hastinapura. There was a mixed population of Aryans and Dravidians in the valley of the Jumna and also the Gangetic valley with some pure Aryans to the north of the Ganges. There were some stray Brahmin settlements in the Central Provinces which were naturally but sparsely populated by Dravidian people. In Malwa, Rajputana, Kathiawar and Cutch mixed Aryans had already established kingdoms. Sind on the west was probably peopled already by offshoots of the Aryans from the Punjab, while on the east Bengal had been explored but was not yet under the influence of the Aryans. Madras and all the country to the south of the Godavari was likewise known, but not under the sway of the Aryans.

The new Aryan settlers and their progeny, the mixed Aryans though originally not much troubled by ideas of caste and sacrifice, the chief characteristics of their predecessors in settlements, soon gave way before the pompous religion of the latter in

* The Ramayana in some aspects furnishes evidence for some centuries before and after this *i.e.*, from 3500 B. C. to 100 B. C.

conformity with that historical law which subjects the less civilised conquerors to the higher civilization and religion of the conquered. It is natural to expect that the mixed Aryans of the middle country, as we may call it, became the most orthodox Aryans by and by, and the centre of political power having shifted to Kurukshetra, Kurukshetra became slowly the centre of Aryan religion and the middle country became the home of the Aryans. But Aryavarta or the Aryan land included properly enough the country lying between the Himalayas and the Vindhya which as a matter of fact had become peopled with Aryans and mixed Aryans, except perhaps the hilly and jungle tracts. Caste soon became dominant among these people, and even the mixed Aryans must have soon ceased marrying Dravidian women, and hence it is that the population still preserves the traces of its Aryan origin. We attach hereto a map showing the various kingdoms into which Aryan India was divided at the beginning of the epic period. Each kingdom represents a separate clan which probably possessed separate characteristics but all presumably spoke dialects of the same language, professed the same religion and revered the same Vedas. They were all virtually independent, though nominally subject to the rule of the victorious Pandavas.

But above all, they all delighted in bearing the same name viz. the Aryans. With that word, as we have stated elsewhere, they identified everything that was noble, good and virtuous and naturally enough the word Arya in Vedic and later literature came to be synonymous with good, so much so that

people in India of to-day sometimes ask the question whether the word Arya at any time denoted a distinct race. Even in the epics such expressions as **जीणामार्यैस्त्वभावानां** can as well be explained on the supposition that there was no distinct Aryan race as distinguished from the aborigines. There are, however, clear traces in the Mahabharata of the word Arya being used to signify the Aryan race. Even in the Rigveda we find the word Arya denoting the people of a race distinguished from the aborigines. The verse quoted in the foot-note from the Rigveda (x, 38, 3.) clearly brings together the three peoples with whom the Vedic Aryans were in constant contact.* "The enemy who wishes to fight with us Oh Indra, whether Dasa or Arya or Adeva (or Asura)" brings together the aboriginal Dasa, the Indo-Aryan and the Asura or the Iranian from whom he had separated, in one line. The commentator Sayana had lost all idea of a distinct race of Aryans and explains Dasa as Shudra and Arya as the three higher classes. But even then we have the fact clear that the three higher castes bore the name of Arya while the lowest was called Dasa. This Vedic distinction between Aryas and Dasas was probably lost sight of in the course of the epic period. The Aryans no doubt retained the name Arya and called their own land Aryavarta. But the name Arya now became opposed to Mlenchha and not to Dasa or Adeva. The Mahabharata constantly speaks of the Aryas *i.e.*, the orthodox population of the country between the Himalayas and the Vindhya range as

* ये नो दास आर्यो वा पुरुषद्वितादेव इन्द्र युषये धिकेतति ॥

distinguished from the Mlenchhas who inhabited countries beyond these whether to the east, south or the west. In the Bhishmaparva where the different peoples of India or Bharatavarsha are mentioned it is expressly stated in the beginning that the peoples were Aryas, Mlenchhas and mixed races.* Though in the list of the peoples given hereafter it is not stated which were Arya and which Mlenchha and which were mixed, some Mlenchhas are mentioned by name in the west like the Yavanas and the Shakas. But certain it is that at the end of the epic period i.e., after the conquest of Alexander there were kings in India who called themselves Aryans and who called other people who lived in and occupied the surrounding tracts, by the name of Mlenchhas. When Arjuna goes about the Indian world conquering the several people amongst whom the sacrificial horse roamed it is stated that he conquered both Aryan and Mlenchha kings.† It seems clear that there were Aryan as well as Mlenchha kings in India and the word Arya was still indicative of race.

But the Aryans had not only not forgotten their race but had not also forgotten the superiority of their race in morality, and we find the epics constantly using the word *Arya* to signify what is good and high, conscious of the fact that the word meant originally a race and that high morals were characteristic of that race only. *Anaryajushta*

* आर्या म्लेच्छाश्च कौरव्य तैर्मित्राः पुरुषा विभो । श्री० । ९ । ११

† किंरता यवना राजन् बहुबोधिपशुर्बरा ॥

म्लेच्छाभ्यामे बहुविधाःपूर्वं ये निहृता रणे ॥ २५ ॥

आर्याश्च पूषिर्वापालाः प्रहृष्टा नरबाह्वनाः ।

is an expression of frequent occurrence in the epics showing that "not practised by the Aryans" was synonymous with 'not good' or 'not moral.' A peculiar use of the word *Mlenchha* is to be found in the following line: "The Aryas do not *mlenchhise* in language nor do they walk in deceitful paths,"* thus showing that the distinction extended even to the language of the Aryans. Instead of saying that the Aryans did not commit a mistake in speaking they merely said that the Aryans did not *mlenchhise* in speaking.

To recapitulate ; in the Vedas the Aryans speak of themselves as distinguished from the Dasas or aborigines and the Asuras or Iranians. Gradually through the epic period they lost sight both of the Iranians by distance, and of the Dâsas or aborigines by extinction or assimilation. They now spoke of the Aryans as distinguished from the Mlenchhas who surrounded their country. Let us examine who were included in that word. When the cow of Vasishtha created the Mlenchhas to destroy the army of Vishvamitra who was trying to take her away by force it is stated that the cow created from the several parts of her body the Palhavas, the Dravidas, the Shakas, the Yavanas, the Shabaras, the Poundras, the Kiratas, the Sinhalas, the Barbaras, the Khasas, the Chibukas, the Pulindas, the Chinas, the Hunas, the Keralas, and many other Mlenchhas. A somewhat different origin is however given in another placet† which seems to be the more ancient

* नापो म्लेच्छन्ति भाषामिमांषया न चरन्त्युत ॥ स० ५९ । ११

† यदोस्तु यादवा जातास्तुर्षसोर्यवनाः स्मृताः ।

द्रुमोः सुतास्तु ई भोजा अनोस्तु म्लेच्छजातयः ॥ आदि० ८५ । १४.

belief *viz.*, that "from Yadu were born the Yadavas, from Turvasu the Yavanas while the sons of Druhyu were the Bhojas and those of Anu were the Mlenchhas." Whatever the origin of the Mlenchhas it appears plain from the account first given that the Dravidian peoples of the south were looked upon as Mlenchhas or non-Aryans equally with the Yavanas and the Shakas of the north-west. It seems also probable that the Aryans of India knew of these Yavanas and Shakas and Hunas and Chinas long before they actually invaded India for it seems probable that the Aryans had trade relations with these outer peoples and thus came to know these races accurately.*

* Long before Alexander's invasion *i.e.*, long before 300 B. C. the Aryans not only knew the races outside India but knew accurately the races and the people who inhabited this vast country from one end to the other, whether they were Aryan Mlenchha, or mixed races. In fact the Indians at that time knew India thoroughly well and had a most accurate knowledge of its geography and of its people. In proof of this we have not only the Mahabharata but the evidence of foreign visitors like Megasthenes and those learned persons who accompanied Alexander on his expedition. Unfortunately the work of Megasthenes is lost but fragments preserved from it are often of very great value. Now nothing is clearer than that the whole of India was at that time perfectly known, and what is really strange accurately measured. As General Cunningham has stated, according to Strabo Alexander got the country described to him by men "well acquainted with it." On the authority of these and the accounts of the *Stathmæ* or marches, Eratosthenes has described India as a rhomboid. "The close agreement of the dimensions given by Alexander's informants with the actual size of the country is very remarkable and shows that the Indians at that early date of their history had a very accurate knowledge of the form and extent of their native land. (Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India).

We have corroborative evidence of this view in the Manusmriti also which we look upon as nearly contemporaneous with the last edition of the Mahabharata. The Manusmriti preserves clear traces of the word Arya being used as denoting a distinct race. At the end of the Vedic period and the beginning of the epic as we have shown above the word Arya was opposed to Dasas and Asuras, in other words the aborigines and the Iranians. At the end of the epic period the word Arya comprises not only the three castes but also the Shudra within it and is opposed to Mlenchhas. The following shloka* from the Manusmriti is very significant in this connection.

“All peoples who are outside the castes born of the head, the arm, the thigh and the foot of Brahma whether they speak the Aryan or the Mlenchha languages are Dasyus.”

A clear indication of the word Arya being used to denote a good man owing to the moral superiority of the then superior races which are also called by the same word Arya is found in the following

In the Mahabharata India is described as a leaf of the *Pippala*-tree or in the language of geometry as an equilateral triangle, one angle of which was at Kabul, another at Cape Camorin and the third roughly speaking in Kamarupa or Assam. An equilateral triangle might be inscribed in this triangle, dividing it into four smaller equilateral triangles. The first and the second represent, we may take it roughly, the Aryan and mixed Aryan races of India ; while the third and the fourth represent the Mongolian and Dravidian peoples, the population near the dividing lines being a mixture in a more or less prominent manner of Aryans and Mongolian or Aryans and Dravidians as the case may be.

* मुखबाहुपङ्गानां या लोके जातयो बहिः ।

म्लेच्छवाचश्चायं वाचः सर्वे ते दस्यवः स्मृताः ॥ १०-४६.

shloka* of Manu and shows the belief of the Aryans of India in the great principle of heredity carried through males :—

“A person born of an Arya from a non-Aryan woman is also an Arya in qualities while it is certain that a person born of a non-Aryan male on an Aryan woman will be an un-Arya or a bad man.”

At the beginning of the epic period then *i. e.*, about 3000 B. C. according to our view or about 1400 B. C. according to the view of those who place the Mahabharata war from 1250 to 1400 B. C., the Punjab, Afganistan and Kashmere were inhabited by pure Aryan races. The Gangetic valley with the exception of a few pure Aryan people here and there and the whole of the valleys of the Jumna and the Chumbal, Malwa, Gujarat, and Kathiawar were peopled by mixed Aryans. In Bengal there were probably Mongoloid people while to the south of the Nerbudda there were Dravidian races. What happened during the epic period, it is easy to surmise. It is natural to expect that Aryan races might filtrate though not to a very large extent down into Bengal in the east and into Maharashtra in the south. We have it from the Mahabharata and the Manusmriti also as well as from the evidence of Greek writers that at the end of the epic period *i. e.*, about 300 B. C. India was fully peopled and completely and accurately known, and that the Dravidians and the Vangas in the farthest south and the farthest east were still looked upon as non-

* जातो नार्यामनार्यायामार्यादायो मवेद्गुणैः ।

जातोऽप्यनार्यादायोऽयामनार्य इति निश्चयः ॥ १० । ६०

Aryan people, while the people of Aryavarta delighted in calling themselves Aryas and prided themselves upon their moral superiority to other races. These conclusions tally completely with the conclusions arrived at by Sir. H Risley on anthropometrical considerations with the single exception of the people of western India, *viz.*, West Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Konkan and Coorg whom he looks upon as Scytho-Dravidian in descent.

The question, therefore, seems extremely interesting; what are the races who inhabit these parts? The modern inhabitants of these parts are characterised by broad heads, moderately fine and not conspicuously long noses, fair complexion and medium stature. Sir H. Risley concludes from their having a lower orbito-nasal index than the Turko-Iranians as well as from their greater length of head, their higher nasal index and their shorter nose, that they are "a result of cross to a more or less varying extent between the Scythians and the Dravidians, the latter element increasing in the lower type till at last we come to the *Katharis* who are distinctly Dravidian with their long heads and flat noses." Sir H. Risley then goes on to relate the story of the Scythian invasion of India, as can be found from Chinese as well as Indian sources, and finds some support to his theory from the fact that the Marathas are well-known riders. "It is not wholly fanciful" says he "to discover some aspects of Maratha history which lend it incidental support. On this view the wide ranging forages of the Marathas, their unscrupulous dealings with friend and foe, their genius for intrigue and their consequent failure

to build up an enduring dominion, and finally the individuality of character and tenacity of purpose which distinguish them to the present day, all these may be regarded as part of the inheritance which has come to them from their Scythian ancestors."

Coming though it does, from such a high authority, we are yet constrained to dissent from this view, for reasons which we shall try to elucidate with as much clearness as we can command. One cannot at the outset help expressing the belief that preconceived notions about the Marathas embodying a disparaging idea about their deeds and their rule in the past has as much to do with the inception of this theory as the seemingly inexplicable brachy-cephalic character of their head. The idea of a Scythian origin for some people of India has always been a fascinating one. The vague description recorded of the Scythians by Herodotus, of their bravery, of their always fighting on horse-back, of their running away from and returning to attack their foe and their immolation of women on the dead seems to offer points which easily induce one to ascribe a Scythian origin to many noteworthy warlike races of India. But anthropometric measurements have completely falsified the identification which used hitherto to be made between the Rajputs and the Scythians and the heavy Jats have also been found to be of pure Aryan and not Scythian descent. The Scythian spectre has, however, now been moved further down and it sits heavily this time on the broad-headed Marathas. But the first point that strikes one as militating against the theory of a Scythian origin for the Marathas is that while the Marathas

are as broad-headed as the Gujaratis the latter do not share any of the qualities which are supposed to identify the Marathas with the Scythians. In fact if all the people in the western belt of India are Scythians why do they not all share the war-like character, the unscrupulousness and the tenacity of purpose which Sir H. Risley sees in the Marathas? The Gujaratis differ as distinctly from the Marathas as the latter are differentiated from the people of Konkan. It would have been something in favour of a Scythian origin for the Marathas, if that descent had been exclusively assigned to them in contradistinction with the other peoples of western India.

It is also curious that while the Marathas are the only people who have the same character as that assigned to the Scythians they are yet the very people who from the history of the Scythian invasion of India which Sir H. Risley has given, had practically nothing to do with it. The Scythian invasion, so far as can be gathered from the facts of ancient Indian history recently brought to light, came only as far down as Gujarat and did not penetrate into Maharashtra at all. Sir H. Risley states that in about 25 B. C. a body of Scythians being disturbed by the Yue-chi in Segistan or Shakastan emigrated eastward and founded a kingdom in the western portion of the Punjab. It is not stated that this invasion came further down. Sir H. Risley speaks of another invasion of the Indo-Scythian Yue-chi who occupied Central Asia and the north-west of India for five centuries from 130 B.C. to 425 A.D. He then mentions the Huns and their chief Toramana who

took possession of Gujarat, Rajaputana and a portion of the Gangetic valley between 490 and 515 A.D.* These were eventually driven away by a confederation of the Hindu princes of Malwa and Magadha, Mr. Smith who has recently written an admirable history of ancient India, in his account of the Scythian invasion and occupation of India gives for the Yue-chi occupation of India not so early a date as 130 B. C. but puts it down to 75 A. D. under Kadphises II. whose son was the well known Kanishka (p. 222 to 224.)

But taking the facts and dates as given by Sir H. Risley or by Mr. Smith we find that the first invasion of the Shakas† did not extend beyond the Nerbudda and that their kingdoms lasted for some time between 130 B. C. to 400 A. D. in Kathiawar and a portion of Malwa. The wonder then is that while the population of Gujarat which was the scene of the Scythian invasion and of Scythian rule

* This invasion of the Huns did not descend to western India at all but remained confined to northern India and chiefly to the Punjab.

† The Shaka dynasty was founded in the first century of the Christian era by a chief named Bhumaka Kshaharata who was followed by Nuhapana a member of the same clan. In the middle of the second century the Satrap Rudradaman having decisively defeated the Andhra kings (who ruled Maharashtra) firmly established his own power not only over Saurashtra but also over Malwa, Cutch, Sind and the Konkan. The capital of Chastana and his successors was Ujjain. About 388 A. D. Chandragupta Vibramadilya of the Gupta dynasty in Northern India attacked dethroned and slew the Satrap Rudra-sinha son of Satyasinha and annexed his dominion, (P. 255-286 Smith's *Early History of India*).

does not exhibit any of the characteristics which distinguished the rude Scythians, the Marathas whose country was never visited by them possess their characteristics to a remarkable degree. One cannot but think that this theory of a Scythian origin for both the Gujaratis and the Marathas is not well supported by history.

We even think that the fancied resemblance in the character of the Marathas and that of the Scythians of the days of Herodotus has no reality in fact or, if it has it is merely a matter of accident. It is very often the case that races change their mental characteristics in the process of time, owing to change of climate and circumstances. It is thus in the first place not possible to prove that the Scythians who invaded India had the same temperament as the Scythians of southern Russia who are so graphically described by Herodotus and who frustrated the designs of Darius by the masterly retreat they practised. But we have actual, recorded evidence to show that the Marathas of to-day are very different from the Marathas of the 7th century A. D. Hiuen Tsiang has recorded a detailed description of the Marathas of his time. They were then tall and powerful, much given to drink, and despised guerilla warfare or a treacherous attack. On the contrary they gave their enemy notice before they attacked him and did not fight a runaway battle. They used elephants in their attack and made them intoxicated also. Thus intoxicated, both men and animals fell upon the enemy and knew no alternative but death or victory. Such were the formidable Marathas in the days of Hiuen Tsiang

and one would hardly recognise these characteristics in their descendants of to-day or those who harassed the armies of Aurangzeb. Characters, temperaments, habits and modes of life might and do change and one can scarcely trust to arguments based on such resemblances as to the origin of peoples.

But the theory of a Scythian origin for the Marathas is also negatived by the dates of history. Sir H. Risley and even Mr. Smith do not carry this Scythian invasion of India earlier than 135 B. C.; and the occupation of Kathiawar, Gujarat and Malwa, Mr. Smith does not place earlier than the middle of the first century of the Christian Era. The events of a defeat of the Shakas are even much later and extend upto the fourth century after Christ. Now there is express evidence to show that the Marathas were already a recognised people in the time of Ashoka. In a rock-cut edict of the emperor which is dated 265 B. C. *i. e.*, more than a hundred years before the Scythians ever came to India it is stated that Ashoka sent an embassy to the Rattis and the Paithanites, the former being evidently the ancestors of the Marathas and the latter the inhabitants of Paithan who were probably of the same race. The Rattis soon grew into importance and assumed, as is usual, the name of Maha-rattis. By that name they are more than once mentioned in the cave inscriptions of Karli and Naneghat as shown by Dr. Bhandarkar as early as the first century B. C. Mr. Smith in his early history of India also records that King Hala of the Andhra dynasty who ruled about 68 A. D., composed an

anthology of erotic verse in the ancient Maharashtri language. We do not think it possible that the Scythian invasion and rule which came as far as Gujarat and Malwa only and that too subsequent to 68 A.D., and which could have sent offshoots if at all into the Deccan, might have so far impressed the population as to swamp their characteristics entirely and to impress their own. Gujarat again was already peopled entirely and there were Aryan kingdoms of long standing there—kingdoms which are mentioned even in the present Mahabharata and it is difficult to believe that the Scythian invasion could have obliterated that dense population which must have existed there owing to the fertility of its soil and the salubrity of its climate. The inhabitants of Gujarat are tall and those of Kathiawar were noted, even in the days of the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea of the 1st century B.C.; as they are now, “for their superior stature” and their country was known for the fertility of its soil and its cotton fabrics (Ancient India by *Ptolemy* p. 36). These cannot have been the Scythians of stunted stature.

And here we may mention another circumstance of very great importance. To our mind it may be taken as a general rule that an invading people will scarcely impress themselves upon a population which is strong, civilized and already overflowing. In India we have the remarkable example of the Punjab. That province has been the trampling ground of every successive invasion of India from the Greeks down to Nadirshah and Ahmedshah Abdali. During the course of nearly two thousand years Greeks, Bactrians, Parthians, Huns, Scythians

Arabs, Turks, Moguls, Persians and Afgans have conquered and held sway over that province of India. It is, therefore, a remarkable fact that in spite of so many inrushes of foreign peoples and races from so remote a date, the people of the Punjab are still the foremost race of Indo-Aryans in India, without any appreciable mixture of blood, according to Sir H. Risley's own showing. One explanation only of this phenomenon is possible *viz.*, that the successive waves of invasion and rule made no impression on the population at all. People spread and multiply when there is room for expansion. In a sparsely peopled country like America when the British went to settle there, or like the Punjab when four thousand years before Christ the Indo-Aryans came into it, the incoming population tends to oust the natives, insignificant as they are both in numbers and in civilization, or to exterminate them and then spreads and increases by leaps and bounds until the country by the limits of its extent and resources places a check on the further growth of population. But when foreigners come into a country already civilized and thickly populated, they will be either absorbed in the existing population so as not to be recognised or will themselves dwindle down into nonentity in the process of time, if prejudices on both sides prevent their intermingling. We believe the latter has been the case with the Punjab under the successive invasions beginning with the Greeks. The Indo-Aryans already overflowing the land and already in the grip of the institution of caste, could not absorb the new-coming races. Nor could the latter increase in numbers which originally could

not have been more than some thousands or at the most a few lakhs. The invaders in such a country, if they are not extinct, take their rank as one of the prominent castes and become a part and parcel of the people. It is in this way that we can explain why the Tamil population to the south of the Godavari remains Dravidian in spite of the incoming of a few Brahmins or Kshatriyas among them. They were already so numerous as to occupy the land fully and so advanced in civilization as to be incapable of extinction. It is for this reason that we think that in Gujarat, the Deccan and the Konkan as far as Coorg, Scythian invasions, even if they did go so far as that, could not have affected the population which as we know from Greek accounts was already overflowing the land and Aryanised.

Other considerations also militate against the theory of a Scythian origin for the people of western India. We find from the "Ancient India" of Ptolemy himself that in his time *i. e.* about the beginning of the Christian Era, the modern Maharashtra and Konkan were known by the name of Ariake. "Ariake" observes MacCrindle "corresponded nearly with Maharashtra—the country of the Marathas. It may have been so called because its inhabitants being chiefly Aryans and ruled by Indian princes were thereby distinguished from their neighbours." Indeed Maharashtra and the Konkan are conterminous with the borders of the Dravidian land even now. Whether in the Konkan or above the Ghauts the country of the Marathas ends where the Dravidian languages begin and the nature of the population—is

also changed. The people to the southward and eastward are darker, stronger and rougher where the Dravidian languages begin. It is impossible not to mark the change in the race of the people with the change in the language even in these days. It is hence we suppose that this boundary province of Aryanism was called Ariake by the Dravidian people who also call the language of Maharashtra or Marathi even now by the name of Aryamata or the language of the Aryans. Ariake, Ptolemy divides into : 1st Ariake Sandinon or belonging to the dynasty of Sandanes who made himself master of Kalyan a town in the Konkan still called by that name, the chief port in it being Sopara so often mentioned in Buddhistic literature of pre-Christian date; 2nd Ariake of the Pirates which corresponds in a great measure with southern Konkan of modern days and which was the arena of the depredations of *Maratha* pirates down to almost the beginning of the nineteenth century; and 3rd Ariake in the interior containing the principal towns of Paithan and Tagarpura which is usually identified with Kolhapur. The information, therefore, which Greek savants gathered from Alexander to Ptolemy, a period, as early as 327 B.C. to 150 A.D., shows clearly that even at that remote time the Maharashtra was called by the name of Ariake, its people spoke the Maharashtri language, a language derived from Sanskrit and called by the name of Aryamata by the Dravidians; and the extent and the circumstances of the country and the people were exactly the same as they are now. It is, therefore, difficult to suppose that a Scythian invasion could have come into the land hereafter and so im-

pressed the population as to transform their Aryan or mixed Aryan character into Scythian. Lastly the *Harivamsha* (chap. 49) actually mentions a tradition that the cities of Karavira and Krauncha were founded near the Sahya range by Padmavarna and Sarasa two sons of Yadu by Naga wives. The kingdom of which Karavira was the capital lay about the river Vena and was called Padmavata and the kingdom, the capital of which was Krauncha where we are told that champa trees abounded, was called Vanavasi.* This coupled with the fact that the copper-plate grants of Deccan kings describe them as belonging to the Yadava family points to the existence of a general tradition that the Marathas were a people born of Yadava and kindred races of Aryans from Dravidian wives.

But one may be disposed to exclaim that the difficulty created by the anthropometrical measurements of the people of western India still remains unsolved. Although history, geography and tradition may be against the theory of a Scythian origin the distinct brachy-cephalic character of the people of the western provinces of India is a great obstacle in the way of their being treated as Aryans or mixed Aryans. We think even in the matter of anthropometrical measurements Sir H. Risley's theory is open to serious objections. We approach this part of the

* This country is well known in the early history of India. It lies to the north of the Tungabhadra in the territory of the present Mysore State. Its name occurs in the *Mahabharata*, and Ptolemy mentions it as situate in Ariake of the interior. In the *Mahavanso* it is stated that after the second Buddhist Council in 245 B.C. the Buddhist missionary Rakshita was sent to this country. The name frequently occurs in later Mysore inscriptions also.

subject with great diffidence inasmuch as it is one which requires careful and systematic study. But with all due diffidence and with due deference to the opinions of a person who has so long given the question his best attention and has had the benefit of actually working out the system of measurements, we will state our arguments as well for the consideration of the public as of Sir H. Risley himself. The first point we would urge is that anthropologists have no knowledge of the Scythians except from history. No people exist by that name now whose anthropometrical characteristics could be noted and compared with those of the people of western India. Secondly, as it is, all accounts agree in looking upon these people as belonging to the Mongolian type. The Scythians who came to India originally lived on the borders of China and thence by successive stages came to the Hindukush mountains. There is, therefore, nothing to show that they can have any other anthropometrical characteristics than the Mongolian races. Now as Sir H. Risley himself has said, the naso-malar index is the only distinguishing feature by which it can be determined whether a particular people are Mongolian in origin or not. To quote Prof. Fowler quoted by him in his article on the 'Study of Ethnology in India,' "For the supposed affinity of a people with the Mongolian races I would prefer this to any other measurement; as *platyopy* is far more characteristic than *Brachy-cephaly* of these races" It appears that this naso-malar index preferred by Prof. Fowler is named the orbito-nasal index in the last census report and as given in the ethnographic appendices to Vol I, the mean index

for the Nagar Brahmin is 116·7, that for the Prabhu is 113·4 and that for the Coorg is 120. Now according to Sir H. Risley's scale, these chief races of western India are not only not platyopic at all but are not even mesopic. They are distinctly pro-opic and their index approaches and even extends in the case of the Coorg beyond the average index given for the Rajputs which is 117·9. It is, therefore, impossible to understand how a Scythian origin can be assigned to the people of western India when they are not distinguished by platyopy at all nor even by mesopy, and platyopy even more than brachy-cephaly is the distinguishing characteristic of the Mongolian race according to Prof. Fowler and Sir H. Risley himself. To speak in a language which is free from all technical terms, the people of western India have not got those flat faces which are the peculiar characteristic of the people of China, Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal, Assam and Burma. The root of their noses is always sufficiently raised above the level of their eyes as shown even by scientific measurements. How can these people be supposed to be a mixture of Scythians, who were only a Mongolian race, and Dravidians who are never distinguished by prominent noses? It is in fact difficult to understand the nature of the difference that it is intended to convey by the two terms Scytho-Dravidian and Mongolo-Dravidian adopted for the people of Bengal and its eastern territories. If the Scythians are themselves a Mongolian race the two terms convey the same idea. It seems probable that Sir H. Risley has been led by the natural predilection of his mind to bring in the name of the Scythians who invaded and ruled Gujarat

for some time and has fixed his attention solely on the brachy-cephaly of the people of the west overlooking the fact that these people are not platyopic at all, in spite of the remark of Prof. Fowler that platyopy is more important than brachy-cephaly in determining whether a people are of a Mongolian origin or not.

But how are we to explain the brachy-cephaly of these people? That is a point which still presents some difficulty. How are we to explain the broad heads of the people of Maharashtra and Gujarat when people of the Punjab and Rajputana have long heads? It is generally believed that the Aryans have long heads but the Dravidians too are distinguished by the same characteristic called dolicho-cephaly in scientific language. The chief differentiating character between these two races, however, is the prominent nose and tall stature of the former as against the flat nose and short stature of the latter. The Mongolians have usually broad heads and flat faces, as shown by the orbito-nasal index. Now the broad heads of the Mongolians are not, as Prof. Fowler has cautioned us, their reliable distinguishing feature; that is to say, there are some Mongolian races who have got long heads. We may equally observe that the Aryan races are not always distinguished by long heads. There are some Aryan races who have got broad heads and the most prominent example of the broad-headed Aryan races is the Celtic people of Ireland and France. The Celts are undoubtedly Aryans and they are also admittedly brachy-cephalic. The explanation, therefore, we offer of the broad heads of the people of western

India is that they are the descendants of Aryans who were brachycephalic. Now we have already accepted the theory of Dr. Grierson and Sir H. Risley that there were two Aryan invasions of India, on the evidence of the Mahabharata also. Those Aryans who came first through the north-west gate into the Punjab and settled there were long-headed people with prominent noses and tall statures. Their descendants to this day exhibit the same characteristics. The Aryans of the second invasion which came through the regions about Gilgit were in our opinion brachycephalic and it is these Aryans and their mixed descendants who overspread the valley of the Jumna and from thence as we have already shown spread into the valley of the Chambal, into Kathiawar and Malwa, into Gujarat and Maharashtra and slowly filtered down to Coorg.

This theory of the second batch of Aryan invaders being distinguished by broad heads not only explains how the people of western India are broad-headed and at the same time are not flat-faced but also does away with another objection which can so well be brought against Sir H. Risley's division of the races of India. Sir H. Risley has called the people of the United Provinces of India by the name of Aryo-Dravidian, because they are distinguished by medium heads and moderately prominent noses. Now the question naturally arises, if according to Sir H. Risley these people are a mixture of Aryans of the second invasion and Dravidian races, and if these Aryans are to be believed to have had long heads like the Aryans of the Punjab, how is it that the mixed progeny of Aryans and Dravidians

of the United Provinces have medium heads ? For both the component parts *viz.*, the Dravidians and the Aryans according to the opinion of Sir H. Risley had long heads. How can then the mixed progeny have medium heads unless we grant and believe that the Aryans of the second invasion had broad and not long heads ? The theory that the present population of northern India is a mixture of Aryans and Dravidians is not enough to explain their medium heads unless we add that these Aryans were a broad-headed people.

The existence of broad-headed Aryan races in the east corresponding to the Celts of the west need not cause surprise. Even among the Iranian races, we believe, there may be some peoples who are broad-headed and we make a surmise, though it is not necessary for our argument that the Parsis of to-day are a broad-headed people. It would be an extremely interesting study if the anthropometric measurements of all castes and peoples in western India and for that matter in the whole of the country are undertaken at no distant date, earlier at least than the next census operations and placed before the public. As Sir H. Risley has pointed out the system of caste, in India ancient as it is, has preserved through hundreds of generations the physical peculiarities of the several peoples. It is, we, think, possible that some castes may be found in Gujarat and western India who represent the remnants of the Shakas who ruled in that part of the country supposing that they have not already died out entirely. In all cases the measurements should, it is suggested, be taken over a large number of subjects both male and female. This

is, however, by the way, and may be excused as a necessary digression.

Only one point remains to be explained on the basis of our theory of an Aryan extension into Gujarat, Malwa and Maharashtra. It is possible to object that if the second wave of invasion consisted of broad-headed Aryans how is it that the people of Rajputana are long-headed Aryans? We believe that the sandy lands of Rajputana were for a long time neglected by the Aryans whether of the first or the second invasion, in their settlement of the country. The history of the Rajputs of Rajputana shows that these tracts were settled in quite modern times by Aryan Kshatriyas who came from the Gangetic valley, under the stress of circumstances. The Rahtors of Jodhapur came from Kanouj on the Ganges while the Sesodias of Udaipur and the Kachha of Jeypur came from Oude within historical memory. We have already stated that the Gangetic basin was peopled first by Aryans of the Punjab and these, therefore, naturally belonged to the long-headed races who probably did not keep marriage relations with the mixed Aryan races. It is peculiar to note that the Rajputs who subsequently came into power in these provinces of Rajputana do not even now keep such relations with the Kshatriyas of Oudh and Agra. In fact the instinct of caste has become so ingrained in and natural to the Indian mind, that the Rajputs of pure Aryan descent decline even now, as thousands of years ago, to take girls from, or give girls in marriage to the Aryans of mixed descent whether they be the Kshatriyas of the United Provinces, or the Kathis of Kathiawar and the Marathas of Maharashtra.

Considered from all points, of view, therefore, we think that the theory of a Scythian origin for the people of the western belt India in their higher grades and castes, is an untenable one. The lower classes down to the Katkaries and Bhils have increasingly long heads and flat noses as shown by Sir H. Risley himself. There is thus no doubt that the original strata of the people in western India is Dravidian. The increasingly broader heads in the higher classes can not be supposed to be indicative of a Scythian origin inasmuch as their moderately fine noses and especially the clear rising of the root of their noses above the level of the eyes negatives the possibility of a Scythian or in other words, a Mongolian origin. History also shows that the people of Kathiawar, Gujarat and Maharashtra with their distinctive physical characteristics were well known from before the days of Ptolemy down to the days of Huien-Tsiang; and that these countries were fully populated even in the days of Alexander and certainly before any Scythian invasion came into India. The evidence of language and tradition also in its small way goes to corroborate the theory that the people of Maharashtra are akin to the mixed Aryans of Kathiawar and the United Provinces. The only natural suggestion, therefore, is that the people of western India are the descendants of a mixed race of broad-headed Aryans and Dravidians, the higher castes being more Aryan than Dravidian and thus preserving their broad heads more and more distinct. The anthropometrical data of the western people with their distinct broad heads and of the people of the United Provinces with their medium

heads can only lead to the theory that the Aryans of the second invasion were a broad-headed people.

We have thought it necessary to go into the question of the origin of the people of western India more minutely than the subject before us required because there apparently seemed a conflict between the conclusions arrived at by Sir H. Risley and the conclusions which can be drawn from a study of the epics on this point alone. As a matter of fact we have now seen that no such conflict really exists. Anthropometrical measurements as well as the history of the Aryan advance in India as disclosed in the two ancient epics of India lead us to the same conclusion *viz.*, that the population of India commencing from Kashmere and the Punjab emphatically possesses Aryan blood in its veins which naturally becomes less and less distinct as we go southwards and eastwards. As the pure water of the Ganges which rising from the snowy Himalayas and emerging upon the plains of India, gathers into its bosom the waters of the several rivers from the south and the east, becomes less and less pure as it nears the sea and yet retains its predominating influence over all the accumulated volume of waters that flows through Bengal, so the Aryan blood becomes less and less pure as we travel from the Himalayan region of the north-west, and yet still holds its predominating influence over the Mongolian and Dravidian blood which in ever increasing proportion mingles with it as we go eastward and southward.

CHAPTER II.

CASTE.

Neither in the past or present ages of world history neither in the east or in the west, has any country except the country of the Hindus developed that intricate social organization, which is known as Caste. This phenomenon of Hindu Sociology has excited the curiosity and rivetted the attention of many, and has furnished a problem of supreme interest to the student of social evolution. Various statements dating from the time of Alexander down to the present day have been recorded by foreigners which embody their impressions on the subject of caste, and many theories have from time to time been formulated by them as to its origin. But the most observant foreigner cannot hope to remark all the intricate details of the caste system of India and on this account as well as in consequence of the different stand-points from which they view the matter-scientists have formed most diverse conclusions on the subject. The latest and most exhaustive summary of the speculations that have been hitherto proffered will be found in Sir H. Risley's most interesting chapter on race, tribe and caste in the latest census report for India. Sir H. Risley has not only given in detail the opinions of great thinkers like

Mr. Nesfield, Sir Denzil Ibbetson and M. Senart but has also criticised these opinions and formulated a theory of his own. We shall, therefore, endeavour to give our own views on the question of the origin and development of caste as based on evidence forthcoming from the two venerable epics of India; for we believe that our attempt far from "making confusion worse confounded", will go a great way towards elucidating a most difficult problem.*

What is caste? That is a question which has exercised the powers of many intellectual men.† To attempt an accurate definition of caste which will comprise the whole system in all its intricate detail and working is indeed difficult. And yet it appears to us that most observers have marked its most striking features. Even Megasthenes who did not thoroughly understand caste as it existed in the days of Chandragupta (300 B. C.) has recorded a sentence which gives the chief features of caste in India even as it exists to-day. "No one" he wrote "is allowed to marry out of his own class or exercise any calling except his own." In other words caste is based on restriction of marriage coupled with restriction of occupation. Thinkers have often been misled into ignoring these important and essential connotations of the term in consequence of the many apparent exceptions to them which occur

* Sir H. Risley believes that in the presence of the apparent difficulties which surround the question "the origin of caste is from the nature of the case an insoluble problem"

† Sir H. Risley has not only quoted the long description of M. Senart but has also given a definition of his own followed by an illustration from English society which though very interesting to an English reader does not much assist an Indian.

in India. Strabo adds the following note to the dictum of Megasthenes, probably on the strength of other observations of Megasthenes himself:—"An exception is made in favour of the philosopher who for his virtue is allowed this privilege." This and other similar exceptions to the fundamental idea conveyed by caste as given above have induced scholars to disregard or forget these two essential restrictions. It is however possible, as will appear hereafter, to explain these exceptions satisfactorily, and we cannot too strongly urge the reader to rivet his attention on these two points. When and why these restrictions arose in India we shall proceed to show.

We must at the outset point out an error into which European thinkers almost unaccountably fall while discussing Indian questions. To accuse the Brahmin or the Pandit as he is sometimes called, of fraud and forgery seems to have become so natural to European scholars that a dispassionate and unbiassed view of any question has become well-nigh impossible. In fact, the practice has become so common that native thinkers are also often tempted by the facility and fascination of the explanation of any knotty point in ancient Indian history which this gratuitous charge easily affords. We have already noticed and commented on an example of this error in our work on the Mahabharata and have shown that even Indian scholars have accepted if not formulated the theory that a fictitious beginning of the Kaliyuga was invented by the Indian astronomer Arya Bhatta as late as 500 A.D. We cannot too strongly caution the reader against

an error of this kind. Referring to the Buddhistic chronicles, Prof. Rhys Davids observes: "It jars upon the reader to hear these chronicles called the mendacious fictions of unscrupulous monks. Such expressions are inaccurate and show a grave want of appreciation of the points worth considering. The Ceylon chronicles would not suffer in comparison with the best of the chronicles, even though considerably later in date, written in England or in France. The opinions of scholars as to the attitude to be adopted towards such works is quite unanimous. The hypothesis of deliberate lying, or conscious forgery is generally discredited. What we find in such chronicles is not indeed sober history, as we should now understand the term but neither is it pure fiction. It is good evidence of opinion as held at the time when it was written. And from the fact that such opinion was then held we can argue back according to the circumstances of each case as to what was probably the opinion held at some earlier time."*

It is strange that this rule of interpreting and treating statements in ancient works, a rule so emphatically in consonance with the rules of appreciating evidence in general, should usually be ignored by European scholars (including Prof. Rhys Davids himself) when they deal with the literature of the Brahmins. We for our part think that the Brahmins and the Pandits were not inferior even if they were not superior, to other people in the matter of veracity and that their records deserve to be treated in the same manner and with the same consideration, as

* Buddhist India p. 274.

the records of the Buddhists or the Christians. Applying this rule to the specific question before us we hold that that famous hymn in the Rigveda which refers to the four castes cannot be looked upon "as a modern interpolation." The hymns of the Rigveda so far as we know were composed during a period ranging from 4000 to 3000 B. C. *i. e.*, during the period when the Indian Aryans came to and settled in the Punjab and extended their settlements thence into the upper Gangetic valley. 'The Ganges and the Jumna are mentioned in one verse and both this verse and the Purushasukta are found in the 10th Book of the Rigveda. The hymns had been collected into a fixed form and had assumed the status of revelation by the beginning of the epic period which we roughly place at 3000 B. C. The statements in the Rigveda, therefore, appear to us to refer not only to the ideas of the Indian Aryans which they brought with them from their original home or which they gathered during their migration to India (a period ranging roughly according to Mr. Tilak from 8000 to 4000 B. C.) but also to their ideas and the circumstances of their society in India itself between 4000 and 3000 B. C. The conclusion is, therefore, irresistible that the Indian Aryans had already developed caste before 3000 B. C. if they did not bring it with them from beyond the Hindukush.

But European scholars cannot bring themselves to believe that the Indo-Aryans could have brought the seeds of caste with them into India from beyond the Hindukush or that they developed it during the Vedic period. They extricate themselves from the necessity of accepting that position

by setting down the Purushasukta as a modern interpolation in the Rigveda, a thing which is almost impossible, and by looking upon the explanation given in the Manusmriti or the Ramayana as a "pious fiction." And yet that position is supported by evidence from the history of the Iranians. Sir H. Risley has himself pointed out that among the Iranians there were four divisions of society *viz.*, priests, warriors, agriculturists and artisans and that the priests or the Athravans did not give their daughters in marriage to the men of the lower classes. Strangely enough Sir H. Risley does not draw the natural conclusion from this historical fact. He does not see that if the priests among the Iranians had constituted themselves into a caste their brethren the Indo-Aryans might naturally be believed to have had among them the embryo which subsequently developed in India into that stupendous tree of vast ramifications which we now call the caste-system.

Instead of drawing this natural inference Sir H. Risley goes to the length of making the suggestion so natural to European scholars that "the modern compilers of the law works having become acquainted with the Iranian legend were fascinated by its assertion of priestly supremacy and made use of it as the basis of the theory by which they attempted to explain the manifold complexities of the caste-system." At what date the law-givers became acquainted with the Iranian legend and in what way they became acquainted with it nobody has shown by any reference to historical documents; nor is it possible to believe that a fiction like this could have

been palmed off on an entire population at a comparatively late period of their development. With the fact before us that a hymn in the Rigveda refers to the four castes and that the Iranians had four classes one of which the priestly class was endogamous, the most natural conclusion would be that the Indo-aryans, who were a people kindred to the Iranians brought with them into India the seeds of a caste-system.

By seeds of caste we mean the principle of restriction of marriage superadded to the principle of restriction of occupation. In all ancient countries occupations were usually hereditary and the same thing is observable to a large extent even in modern societies. The son of a civilian in India is more likely to be a civilian than any thing else. In Egypt and also in Persia there were classes based on differences of occupation. But the restriction on marriage amongst members of the several occupational classes had no existence even in Egypt. We believe the tendency to restrict marriage to the same class belonged to the Aryan race generally and its traces may be discovered not only among the Iranians but among the Romans also who did not primarily allow marriage relations between the Patricians and the Plebeians. It seems probable that while that tendency was soon supplanted or destroyed altogether among other sections of the Aryan race it developed to an extraordinary extent under the peculiar circumstances of India.

And what were those circumstances which surrounded the Indo-Aryans in India and which made the development of the Indo-Aryan society so completely,

and one might add, so disastrously divergent from the social development of the other Aryan races of the world? If we look carefully into the history of the other Aryan races we find that nowhere but in India were the Aryans confronted by a previously settled people who were entirely dissimilar to them in colour and in appearance. In Persia, in Greece, in Rome, in Germany the Aryan races came into contact with peoples who were perhaps not as civilised as themselves but who were not of a widely different complexion. Although, therefore, there might have been some opposition at first to the intermingling of blood it could not have lasted long and the interfusion of races was soon effected. In India however, the colour of the natives of the soil was so divergent and repulsive to the fair-skinned Aryan that we can not but expect that there was a long fight—a fight which was waged with varying vigour and strength and which has not yet quite ended. It is a fight which has no parallel in the history of the world except perhaps in the strange instance in modern times of Europeans coming into close contact with a black population in India, Africa and America. We will attempt to give an account of that fight as it is disclosed to us in the two epics of India.

We have already stated that the Indo-Aryans came into India with the incubus of caste upon them. The ancient Aryans as the Ramayana tells us were in the Krita age i.e., when they were not yet in India, all Brahmins. The first differentiation that took place was that between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, the priests and the warriors. Let us

dispassionately examine the causes which must have gradually raised the Brahmins into sanctity and pre-eminence. The development of sacrifice into an intricate religious ceremony and the development of a sacred literature which could only be preserved by memory, writing being yet unknown, were to our mind the chief causes which led to the foundation of a priestly caste and to its advance to a position of sanctity and veneration. No body can deny the effects of heredity in refining the intellectual capacity and the Brahmins or the priests in India must have found that the sons of Brahmins no matter who their mothers were, were better adapted for the maintenance of the mnemonical labours of their class than the sons of warriors. The people, therefore, naturally divided in the Treta or second age into two classes one given to priestly and the other to military occupation.

But they were all Aryans still and married daughters among themselves indiscriminately. The son of a priest however was a priest and of a warrior a warrior. That was the first development of caste achieved, as we have said, not without a hard struggle. The fight between Vashistha and Vishvamitra described in the Vedas and in the Ramayana as well as in the Mahabharata represents the struggle between the priest and the warrior with regard to the tendency to restrict occupations to particular classes. It was a revolt by the Kshatriyas against the rising dogma that the son of a Brahmin could alone perform priestly duties. Why could not the son of a Kshatriya be a priest? That was in effect the point of contention between

Vashishtha and Vishvamitra a fact which clearly appears through all the haze of superadded mythological circumstance. And we may take it that the result of the struggle was favourable to the Brahmins though Vishvamitra succeeded by dint of perserverance in his own case in becoming a Brahmin. The warriors generally could not maintain that position. Their avocation and their heredity was against them and they gradually adopted the theory that the son of a Brahmin could alone be a priest.

The story of Nahusha's fall from heaven, to our mind, represents a different phase of the same struggle. Why should not a Brahmin be made to work like an ordinary labourer? That was a question which Nahusha raised. He compelled the great Rishis of antiquity to bear his palanquin. He was in consequence cursed by them, so the legend goes, to be thrown down from heaven and grovel as a serpent for ages. We shall have to refer again to this legend hereafter.

These two stories evidently belong to the time when the Aryans were yet beyond the Hindukush. They were then divided into two classes only, priests and warriors, not yet very exclusive and both probably pursued agriculture as a general means of earning their livelihood. When they entered into and settled in the Punjab the vast expanse of rich land lying open before them raised agriculture into importance. A third class was then naturally added *viz.*, the Vish or the settlers. While the warriors found sufficient occupation in subduing the aboriginal population and in founding and governing the different principalities, the Brahmins too found

equally engrossing work in praising the kings and performing their sacrifices. It was in the Punjab that the *Chaturvarnya* or the four-fold caste system was formed towards the end of the Treta age as represented in the Ramayana. The Aryans with their three divisions following different avocations but not yet exclusive were however of one and the same race and they married the daughters of one another indiscriminately. The Dasas or the Shudras of the fourth class were entirely of a different race and most sharply differentiated from them in colour and appearance. They were naturally made to labour in the fields and to do other menial work much in the same way as Europeans in these days in India or in Africa have all menial work done by the black natives of the soil.

The position then at this time was as follows. There were the fair-skinned Aryans divided into three classes who had no objection to marry indiscriminately among themselves. The son of a Brahmin was however a Brahmin though he may be born of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Vaishya wife. There was a fourth class below them composed of the Dasas or aborigines with whom the Aryans were naturally averse to form any marriage relations. Thus there were four classes and four only, the upper three being of the Aryan race and having marriage relations with one another. This is a condition which is certainly more antique than the one we find in the *Manu smriti* and curiously enough we have a proof preserved in the *Mahabharata* itself that this condition of things once actually obtained in India. In the *Anushasana Parva*

Chapter 44 we have the following shloka.* “A son born of a Brahmin from wives belonging to the three castes is a Brahmin. There are only four castes, a fifth does not exist.” This is a statement which none of the later Smritis can subscribe to. That the son of a Brahmin born from a Vaishya woman should be a Brahmin is a thing which is so repugnant to modern feelings that we can only look upon this shloka as preserved by accident in the great epic of India. It clearly belongs to that initial stage in the development of caste when the Indo-Aryans first settled in the Punjab and extended their settlements into the upper Gangetic valley. It is a statement which is reflected in the Purushasukta of the Rigveda. How complications arose subsequently beyond the first four simple castes we will now proceed to show.

We have said that the Aryans did not allow marriage relations with the fourth class the Shudras or Dasas. As a matter of fact there was little to encourage such relations between a fair-skinned, handsome superior population and an inferior people with a black complexion, flat noses and a lower civilization. The Aryans would disdain to marry Dasa women much in the same way as the Europeans in these days disdain to take native women to wife. But this can only be said of the generality. There must have been exceptions (as even among the Europeans of India) especially among the third class of Vaishyas or agriculturists who were brought

* त्रिषु वर्णेषु जातो हि ब्राह्मणाब्राह्मणो भवेत् ।
स्वताश्च वर्णाश्चत्वारः पंचमो नाधिगम्यते ॥

in constant contact with the Shudras or the labourers, of men who were tempted to fall in love with Shudra women. Instances must, therefore, have happened of Aryans taking Shudra wives and this took place probably, frequently among the Vaishyas, often among the Kshatriyas and rarely among the Brahmins who naturally enough represented the rigid tendencies of the orthodox communities. How were the sons of such unions to be treated? Did they follow the caste of the father? According to the practice that had obtained amongst the Aryans of the three castes themselves they would naturally be treated as following the caste of the father. But the progeny of the Aryans from Aryan wives did not differ much from their parents in colour and appearance while the progeny of the Aryans from Shudra or aboriginal wives must have been of various degrees of colour ranging from white to black; nor would they be of the same physical and mental calibre as their Aryan fathers. The question was one of great difficulty and the Brahmins the exponents of rigid orthodox opinion could not allow the Shudra-born progeny to be of the same caste as their fathers. Thus was raised the controversy of seed and soil as it is called in the Manusmriti 'the Bija and the Kshetra Nyaya.' In the beginning the Bija would be allowed all preponderance, but by and by both seed and soil would be recognised as of equal importance. In the beginning the sons of Brahmins by Shudra women were treated as Brahmins as we find from various stories related in the ancient Aryan mythology regarding the birth of many sages. But by and by the Brahmins not only

assigned a separate caste to such progeny but strongly interdicted such ill assorted marriages as that of a Brahmin with a Shudra woman. The following shloka* in the Mahabharata preserved in the same Anushasana Parva Chapter 48 shows the great abhorrence with which such marriages were held at that time. "A Brahmin's son from a Shudra woman is more degraded than a corpse and hence he is called Parashava. He should serve his family and should never give up his own occupation." Here was the beginning of that ramification of caste which subsequently grew into so colossal a tree. The Brahmin looked upon the Shudra woman as a corpse and her son as worse than a corpse. The name Parashava thus explained in the Mahabharata shows how further differentiation of caste was due to the Aryan's dislike to mingle his blood with that of the black Dravidian of India. The Kshatriyas following the example of the Brahmins would prevent a son born of a Shudra woman taking equal rank with such of his sons as were born of Aryan mothers and would, therefore, assign him a separate caste. He is given the name of Ugra or 'fierce' by Manu. But the Vaishya would not have the same dislike as the Brahmin or the Kshatriya as his occupation not only was changing his colour but constantly throwing him into the company of Shudras. And curiously enough Manu does not assign a separate name to the son of a Vaishya by a Shudra woman. Probably he was long treated as a Vaishya and the intermix-

* परं सवाह्राह्मणस्यैव पुत्रं शूद्रापुत्रं पारशवं विदुः ॥

शूद्रपुत्रः स्वस्य कुलस्य स स्वात् सञ्चारिभ्यः नित्यमथो न ज्ञातः ॥

ture of race was more pronounced in the case of the Vaishyas.

This naturally led to a further restriction in marriage. The son of a Brahmin by a Vaishya wife could not now have that purity of blood on which the Aryans gradually came to set so much value. For the intermixture of race between the Vaishyas and the Shudras had become more pronounced and a Vaishya woman was not presumably a pure Aryan. The Brahmins, therefore, would not consider the son of a Vaishya wife on a par with the son of a Brahmin by a Brahmin or a Kshatriya wife. The next stage in the development of caste was to assign to such progeny a different caste and to treat it as inferior to a Brahmin. The rule was, therefore, laid down that the son of a Brahmin by the first two higher caste women and not the third was a Brahmin; *i.e.*, when more than one caste intervenes the progeny is not of the same caste. Curiously enough even this stage in the development of caste is preserved in the Mahabharata in the same Anushasana Parva in another shloka* which is in some sense contradictory to the shloka previously quoted. In Chapter 48 we find it stated "a Brahmin can have four wives but in two from the beginning he himself is born, in two others less pure sons are born in the mother's caste." While we were told in the first quoted shloka that the son of a Brahmin by a Brahmin Kshatriya or Vaishya woman was a Brahmin, here we are told that the son born of a Brahmin from a

* मायां चतस्रो विमस्य द्वयोरान्वाह्य जायते ।
आनुपूर्व्या द्वयोर्द्वौ मातृजात्यौ प्रसूयतः ॥

Brahmin and Kshatriya woman only was a Brahmin. The son of a Brahmin by a Vaishya woman was not a Brahmin but a Vaishya according to this shloka or an Ambashtha as the Manusmriti tells us. In time he was assigned a different caste and this was a further step in the complication of the caste-system. This position *viz.*, that to two grades only was allowed the privilege of bearing a child of the same caste as the father is mentioned even in the Manusmriti with a slight modification, a dictum not accepted by the later Smritis. It was a stage beyond which the caste system had probably already passed in the days of the Manusmriti and no trace of it was left in the days of the Yajnyavalkya and other Smritis of later date.

The development in the ramification of caste from four original castes began thus with the introduction of the Shudra wife in the Aryan family. We need not wonder at that pride of blood which led the Aryans, especially, the most orthodox portion *viz.*, the Brahmins, to refuse to admit the progeny of Shudra women to an equality of caste with the progeny of Aryan wives. We find the same phenomenon producing the same result in these days in India, in Africa and in America. The Europeans who rule in this country and who may well be looked upon as the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas of modern India have equally refused children born of themselves on Indian mothers admission to their own caste. The same pride of blood has prevented such progeny from being merged into the dominating class of Europeans. The same inferiority of colour and capacity which pertains to such progeny has compelled them to be formed into a separate caste

to which they have assigned the name of Eurasians *i. e.* born of European and Asiatic parents. The Indians with their peculiar ideas of caste call them half-castes.

Even though the progeny of European fathers and Indian mothers are Christians, they are thus assigned a position inferior to that of their fathers and effectually for all practical purposes they form a distinct and a lower caste. Not only this; they are not admitted to the same privileges as the ruling class of Europeans. With that natural sympathy, however, which fathers have for their children they are usually taken care of and provided with the occupation which is next best to that of the Europeans. To those who cannot understand the probability of the fact that the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas provided special occupations to the several mixed castes which arose out of their marriage relations with Shudra women, we would point out the instance of the Eurasians and the particular occupations and callings to which their claims are specifically recognised to be superior if not exclusive, by unwritten practice if not by promulgated declarations, under the British Government itself.* Perhaps it may be urged that the British Government prefers to employ Eurasians in certain capacities because they can be trusted. But what makes them trusted except their kinship? The same feelings must have led the ancient Brahmins and Kshatriyas to assign to the Parashavas and Ambashthas the particular lucrative

* In South Africa the Cape boys as they are called born of Europeans from Hottentot mothers have tacitly fallen into the profession of grooms and drivers much like the Sutas in ancient India.

avocations which became hereditary with them in the course of centuries. In a society where the leaders had already made calling hereditary, where the Brahmins were hereditary priests, and the Kshatriyas hereditary warriors, the other castes would soon fall into hereditary occupations and callings. It is not, therefore, a matter of surprise that with the introduction of the Shudra wife, castes began to ramify and occupations began to be split up and hereditarily appropriated. Sir H. Risley has himself quoted under the heading of castes formed by crossing, examples of the formation of new castes and the appropriation by them of special occupations such as the Shagirdapesha of Bengal and Orissa who have become the hereditary family servants of the Kayasthas and the Kshatriyas.

The Mahabharata contains another passage which illustrates this transitional stage in the formation of castes by the introduction of the Shudra wife. The question whether the son of a Shudra wife by a Brahmin should be allotted a share in the father's property is discussed in all its details, and the discussion clearly shows that it was then an unsettled point of practical difficulty. The father perhaps would like to give the Shudra wife's son as good a share as that of the sons born of wives of higher castes but popular feeling would oppose it. It is decided after much controversy that the property of the deceased should be divided into ten shares; four should go to the son by a Brahmin wife, three to that by a Kshatriya wife, two to that by a Vaishya wife and one to the son by a Shudra wife. A Kshatriya's property would similarly be divided

into six shares and that of a Vaishya into three shares one of which would go to the son by a Shudra wife. This position has naturally enough been lost by the Shudra son in later Smritis.

If the Aryans looked upon the marriage of a Brahmin with a Shudra woman as sin they naturally looked upon the marriage of a Brahmin woman with a Shudra man as a still more heinous sin. It was in fact the highest sin that a woman or a man could commit and they visited the progeny of such unions with the direst punishment. Probably the Europeans view the union of a European woman with an Indian husband with equal disfavour. In the nature of things such unions must be and are very rare and the progeny of those few unions which do take place are merged in the great mass of the Indian population following, as it naturally does, the condition of the father. One can well conceive how pride of blood must have led the ancient Brahmins to treat with special abhorrence the progeny of Brahmin mothers and Shudra fathers. All such progeny was treated not as half-castes, but as outcasts and was condemned to live with men of the most degraded calling. Such offspring as this joined the number of those unfortunate persons who were looked down upon as degraded in touch, as only fitted to live outside the habitations of the Aryans, and as deserving of being made to sweep the ground and carry the corpses of dead animals.

That some of the aboriginal peoples whom the Aryans found on the land must have been condemned and compelled to live such an outcast life we are not disposed to doubt. The condition of the

Pariahs is usually levelled against the Brahmins as one of the greatest blots on their high moral ideal; but it was the natural outcome of the vast difference which existed between their civilizations. A repetition of the same scene is being enacted at this very moment in South Africa where we find that the highly civilized and moral races of Europe have assigned a similar position to the rude natives of the soil and to such Indians as have gone there in search of labour. Their dwellings are only allowed to be built at a distance from European habitations. Their very touch is deemed a pollution as that of a Chandal is deemed by a Brahmin in India. They are not allowed to walk in the midst of Europeans through the public streets nor are they allowed to use the same public conveyances. One is disposed to think that if such be the treatment accorded to Indians by Europeans and Christians in South Africa in the 20th century A. D.—a treatment perhaps not unjustified by the differences in the habits of living and the sanitary conditions of their surroundings,—it is not strange that when the Aryans first came into the Punjab, they assigned the same position to some of the most filthy and degraded sections of the aborigines. With this class of persons undoubtedly very small, the Brahmins condemned the progeny of Brahmin women and Shudra men to live and associate.

This is not a pure fiction, as it is sometimes said to be, of later law-givers who thus seek to explain the origin of Chandals and other outcast Hindus. It appears to be an actual fact supported by data supplied by the last census operations. Nay this

fact alone satisfactorily solves that difficulty created by some anthropometrical figures which had confronted Sir H. Risley some years ago. Sir H. Risley in his excellent paper entitled "The Study of Ethnography in India" (printed in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*: Vol. XX) observes, "Within certain geographical boundaries, the social position of a caste varies inversely with its nasal index. I say within certain boundaries because the figures for nine castes in the Punjab do not appear to conform to the rule. With regard to these castes further inquiry may show either that the same law holds good or that its disappearance marks the limit beyond which there has been little or no intermixture with the platyrrhine type." Further inquiry has actually negatived the former hypothesis. It is now clear that outcasts or the lowest classes in the Punjab have a nasal index which is actually lower than some of the higher castes in the other provinces. Thus while the average index of the Chuhra in the Punjab is 75·2, that of the Prabhu in the Bombay Presidency is 75·3, and that of the Khattri in the United Provinces and of the Bania in Bihar is 76·7 and 79·2 respectively. It clearly follows that there is a greater amount of Aryan blood in the veins of the Chuhra in the Punjab than in that of the Prabhu of Bombay or the Khattri and the Bania in the United Provinces and Bihar. Those who believe that the lowest classes in the whole of India consist of the aboriginal degraded population only which the Aryans found on the land find it difficult to explain these figures for the Punjab. We shall recapitulate some of our conclusions which go

to explain satisfactorily these low figures. When the Aryans came into and settled in the Punjab they found a Dravidian population in possession of the soil which was not so numerous as that which occupied lower India. The Aryans in the Punjab during the Vedic times developed caste, and utilized the sparse aboriginal population as Shudras bound to serve the higher classes while the most filthy were treated as outcasts. The progeny of Aryan mothers and Shudra fathers was branded as infamous and was condemned to do the most filthy work and live and mingle with such outcasts. As time rolled on diverse castes grew in number and the rigidity of marriage restrictions became more marked. When the Aryans extended their settlements into the Gangetic Valley and beyond, there was a larger aboriginal population more advanced in civilization and the intermixture in the wrong direction between Aryans and Shudras must have almost ceased in consequence of the severe penalty attached to such unions. In this way alone is it possible to explain how in the lowest classes in the Punjab we find a greater amount of Aryan blood than in those of the other provinces. The very existence of this phenomenon supports three conclusions which are denied by European scholars. First, that caste was developed among the Vedic Aryans in the Punjab; secondly, that the ramifications of the original four castes were due to the introduction of the Shudra wife, a circumstance which was peculiar to India alone, and thirdly, that the formation of the Chandala and other degraded castes as given in the Manu and later Smritis is not a fiction but a fact which actually took place in the

Punjab in the manner stated by Indian law-givers. We shall now go on to explain how in the Aryo-Dravidian and other divisions of India laid down by Sir H. Risley some of the higher castes show a still lower amount of Aryan blood in their veins than even the Chandalas of the Punjab.

We may take it that such was the condition of society by the end of the Vedic period and at the beginning of the epic period, *viz.*, that there were four primary castes in the country from the Indus on the west to the Gogra on the east, and above the Ganges, the region occupied by the Aryans of the first invasion. The first three intermarried without distinction, but the calling of the father was the calling of the son. The Shudra wives who were accepted easily by the Vaishyas and less easily by Kshatriyas and rarely by the Brahmins were adding or had added some new castes, while the condemned unions of Aryan women with aboriginal men were also swelling castes degraded in habit and calling. Such was the state of things when the second immigration of the Aryans came in the beginning of the epic period; they had, as has previously been stated, few women with them. They were driven by the first settled Aryans into countries which were not yet occupied by them *viz.*, into the valley of the Jumna and lower down. They had not yet developed caste and had very little regard for its restrictions; and were compelled by the paucity of their women to freely take wives from the Dravidian population of the country. Thus caste received a sudden shock. Though in the Punjab the state of the population remained as it was, in the valley of the Jumna and

in the valley of the Ganges which, as we have stated in the previous chapter, fell under the dominion of the new Aryans the intermixture of races in all grades of society became extensive and the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, and the Vaishyas, the three higher classes of the new population, were tainted to a very great extent with an admixture of Dravidian blood. It is thus that in the United Provinces and in the provinces lower down, the higher castes exhibit so large a mixture of Dravidian blood as is evidenced by their higher nasal index.

The course of events which we have sketched above is not imaginary but finds actual support from the Nahusha-Saptarshi legend given in the Mahabharata. That legend is most interesting in connection with the subject of caste, and the intermixture of races. We have already alluded to the first portion of the legend and shall now place the latter part of it before the reader. Nahusha compelled by the curse of the Brahmins to become a serpent remained in that form for ages, until he was found by Yudhishtira a descendant of his as he was pouncing upon his brother Bhima. "Answer my question correctly" said Nahusha, the serpent "or else I will finish off thy brother." "Ask Oh great serpent," said Yudhishtira, "I will answer to the best of my abilities." "Who is a Brahmin?" asked Nahusha: Yudhishtira replied "One who is endowed with truthfulness, liberality, forgiveness, good conduct, equality of feeling towards all, austere life, and compassion." "But the four castes do exist:" rejoined Nahusha "what then if truthfulness, liberality, forgiveness &c., are found in a

Shudra?" Yudhisthira answered: "If this mark exists in a Shudra and does not exist in a Brahmin that Shudra is not a Shudra, and that Brahmin is not a Brahmin. O great serpent! Where this mark exists, the person is a Brahmin where it does not, the person is a Shudra." "If, Oh king!" said Nahusha "you think that a man's demeanour makes him a Brahmin then the fact of belonging to a particular caste is of no avail unless a man's actions entitle him to that caste." Here was a most crucial question in the controversy that is sometimes raised even now about caste. The answer which Yudhishtira gave was one which could be least expected by modern theorists who believe that caste had no existence in the days of the Aryans. "The caste, Oh great serpent," said Yudhishtira, "in the presence of the general species of mankind is at present indistinguishable in consequence of the great intermixture of races. Men of all castes beget children on women belonging to all castes indiscriminately. Men are common only in speech, sexual intercourse, birth and death. I will quote a further Vedic argument *viz.*, the verse 'Ye yajamahe.' Therefore, those who have an insight into the essence of things believe that conduct is the chief thing. Castes are useless if suitable conduct does not exist; for the intermixture of races has been very great indeed."*

* नहुषः—ब्राह्मणः कोमवेद्भ्राजन् ।

युधि—सत्यं दानं क्षमा शीलमानुशंस्यं तपो वृणा ।

हस्यते यत्र नागैर्द्रु स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥

नहुषः—चातुर्वर्ण्यं प्रमाणं च सत्यं चेद्ब्रह्म वैवाहि ।

शूद्रेष्वपि च सत्यं स्याद्दानमक्रौष एव च ॥

युधि—शूद्रे तु यद्ब्रह्म तद्भिन्ने तच्च न विद्यते ।

This remarkable dialogue shows clearly three things. First, the Brahmins had placed before themselves a very high ideal indeed when they practised truthfulness, generosity, abstemiousness and love for all not only in their own life but tried to perpetuate these virtues in their caste by preserving the purity of seed, in much the same way as the horse-breeder tries to secure swiftness in a horse by preserving the seed of a race-winner. It cannot be wondered, therefore, that for a time at least the Brahmins must have been a class of persons of exemplary moral life, men who denied themselves the pleasure and pomp of this world, and devoted themselves to the cultivation of knowledge and religious meditation. Small wonder moreover that they raised themselves and their posterity to a position of sanctity not attained by any people in the world, a position which their unworthy descendants have not kept, for reasons which will presently appear. Secondly, at the time of the second Aryan invasion the inter-

न वै शूद्रो मवेच्छद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः ॥

यत्रैतच्छ्रूयते सर्पं इत्तं स ब्राह्मणः स्मृतः ।

यत्रैतन्नभवेत्सर्पं तं शत्रुमिति निर्दिशेत् ॥

नहुषः—यदि ते वृत्ततो राजन् ब्राह्मणः प्रसमीक्षितः ।

इथा जातिस्तदायुष्यन् कतिर्यावन्न विद्यते ॥

युधि—जातिरत्र महासर्पं मनुष्यत्वे महामते ।

संकरात् सर्ववर्णानाम् दुष्परीक्ष्येति मे मतिः ॥

सर्वे सर्वास्त्रपत्यानि जनयन्ति सदा नराः ।

वाङ्मैथुनमथो जन्म मरणं च समं नृणाम् ॥

इदमर्षि प्रमाणं च ये यजामह इत्यापि ।

तस्माच्छीलं प्रधानेष्टं विदुर्ये तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

कृतकृत्याः पुनर्वर्णाः यदि इत्तं न विद्यते ।

संकरस्त्वत्र राजेन्द्र बलवान् प्रसमीक्षितः ॥ वन-१८०

mixture of races became so great in all classes that Yudhishtira could not but say that caste was indistinguishable in the state of unrestricted marriage. Thirdly, the incubus of caste still lay heavily on the people for they did not reject caste altogether as a meaningless restriction. They still believed in the principle of caste *viz.*, the preservation of a high moral character by preserving the purity of seed. If in consequence of intermixture it was difficult to determine who was a Brahmin, they argued from the result to the cause. Wherever purity of moral character was found there was a Brahmin. To quote an example from the Upanishads which were composed at about the same time, a preceptor asked an intending pupil who his father was, and the pupil answered: "My mother said she had lived with many people and did not know who his father was." "Thou speakest the truth" said the Rishi, where probably many would not have spoken it, "and therefore thou art the son of a Brahmin," and the pupil was at once admitted to the school by the name of Satyakama Jabala, "the truth-loving son of the woman Jabala."

The intermixture of races, therefore, must have gone on for a short period only. The fascinating idea of caste which the first Aryans had developed was too strong for the new comers to despise for a long time, and they became gradually subject to the same restrictions of marriage and occupation which had already developed. In fact during all the epic period caste continued to gather strength and to run into ramifications. This state of things continued down to the Buddhistic period when there was a

second and a more conscious revolt against caste, as is evidenced by the growth of the Buddhistic religion.

These conclusions can be surported from the evidence of the Mahabharata as well as the Manusmriti which we hold to be a nearly contemporary work. We have shown by a passage in the Mahabharata that the original Aryan society allowed a Brahmin to have wives from all the three castes *viz.*, Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya and that his son by any of his wives was a Brahmin. Gradually a stage arose when this privilege was accorded only to two wives as evidenced by another shloka in the Mahabharata. Towards the end of the epic period *i.e.*, about the rise of Buddhism even this privilege was taken away from a wife of the first lower caste. The son of a Brahmin by a Kshatriya wife, was not quite a Brahmin. The Manusmriti is compelled to reiterate the position of the Mahabharata *i.e.*, that in two wives he himself is born, but adds that though like, they are tainted by the taint of their mother.* Such sons came to be looked upon as not pure Brahmins and Kshatriyas, though they had not, even in Manu's time, acquired different names as they did in later Smritis. The theory that the seed was the really most important factor can, however, be plainly discerned from the following shloka of Manu.†

“A son born to an Arya from a non-Aryan woman will become an Arya by his qualities but one

* स्त्रीष्वनंतजातासु द्विजैस्त्यादितार सुतार ।
सहस्रानेवतानाहुर्मातृदोषविगर्हितार ॥ अ० १०६

† जातो नार्यामनार्यायामार्याशायो मयेदुजैः
जातोऽप्यनार्यादायामनार्य इति निश्चयः ॥ अ. १०

born to a non-Aryan from an Aryan woman, will undoubtedly be a non-Aryan." Another shloka* brings out a different phase of the same idea. "A non-Aryan behaving like an Aryan and an Aryan behaving like a non-Aryan are, said the Creator after great deliberation, not like, nor unlike." In fact the position which Yudhishtira had taken up was now abandoned. A Shudra who had all the good qualities of a Brahmin is not now equal to a Brahmin who has all the bad qualities of a Shudra or a non-Aryan. The seed as well as the soil to some extent had become indispensable factors of caste by the end of the epic period. "Some praise the seed," says Manu, "and some praise the soil; others praise both. The proper decision is that the seed is more important, even though good seed in bad soil becomes degenerated." By the end of the epic period, caste had nearly developed to its present proportions and it is extremely probable that instead of seven castes in the days of Megasthenes there were many more.

In one important respect, however, there was still one great difference in the caste system as it now is and as it then was. The Brahmin was then allowed to take wives from any of the castes below him and so were the Kshatriyas and other caste people. It was a survival from that first stage of caste development when the Aryan people were really one society divided into three occupational classes. This circumstance must have kept the feelings and bonds of racial sympathy still alive among

* अनार्यमार्यकर्माणमार्यं आनार्यकर्मिणम् .

समेषामपि ब्रह्मविज्ञाता न समौ नासमाविति ॥ अ० १०

the diverse sections into which the society was divided. Only one portion of this common bond of sympathy is mentioned by Megasthenes when as stated by Strabo he observed that the priest alone could marry outside his rank; for as a matter of fact we find every casteman was allowed to marry below him.

There is another feature of the caste system which has escaped the observation of Megasthenes and of several modern observers, and has thus been the cause of their misunderstanding the system in important particulars. It is said by many that from the Manusmriti itself it appears that the Brahmins followed all sorts of occupations and that therefore it is impossible to believe that caste could have had an occupational origin. It must be observed, however, that like marriage, occupation was prohibited upwards only by the caste system. It is difficult to believe that marriage as well as occupation could have been restricted more than this. It is impossible that all the Brahmins at any time could have found priestly occupation or that every one of them was fit for it though in theory it was intended that he should be. All the Kshatriyas similarly could not have become kings or soldiers, and necessity required that while they kept their ideal occupation before them some of them were allowed to resort to callings next best to theirs. Agriculture again was an occupation open to all. The fact however must be remembered that nobody was allowed to take up any calling superior to his own. Instances of transgression must doubtless have often occurred, but they were visited with severe punishment

like instances of hypergamy which were punished by a terrible degradation in caste. The Ramayana supplies an instance of the punishment of death having been inflicted upon a Shudra for practising penance, in other words, for becoming a religious devotee, a thing allowed only to the Aryans. This restriction like the restriction of marriage was galling, and the rise of Buddhism was marked by the entrance of hundreds and thousands of Shudra devotees into the rank of Buddhist Bhikshus. The fact then can not be too strongly insisted on that the several castes were not only allowed to marry below them but to practise occupations which though not their own were open to the rank next below their own. A large part of the Shantiparva of the Mahabharata is occupied with the details of Apaddharma or the duties or occupations which a man was at liberty to follow in times of difficulty or necessity.

Such was the origin and the gradual development of caste among the Aryans of India so far as can be gathered from the two epics, the Vedas and the Manusmriti, the two latter meeting the former as it were at the upper and lower ends in point of time. Though outside the scope of the present book we can not pass on without a brief notice of the subsequent history of caste. Buddhism, as we have already said, was a revolt against Aryan caste as much as against Aryan sacrifice. Caste was given up by the Buddhists including the Aryans and the non-Aryans to whom especially the restrictions of caste in marriage and occupation, were galling ; but Hinduism regained power and strength

after a few centuries in consequence of the decline of morals amongst the Buddhists. The almost ingrained caste tendencies of the Aryan and non-Aryan Hindu population which had never died out again grew stronger and stronger, and when eventually Buddhism was overthrown about 800 A. D. caste restrictions became still more rigid than before the rise of Buddhism. Marriage outside the caste now became entirely prohibited. Instead of the Brahmin being allowed to marry wives from all castes he was now bound down to marry only Brahmin women. The factor which was constantly giving rise to mixed castes was thus entirely removed, and the Hindu population of India now consists of many self-contained castes which are primarily endogamous.

The example of the Aryans with their caste restrictions continually ministering to pride of racial purity and their feeling of superiority to some others in point of lineage if not in other respects was not without its influence on the surrounding non-Aryan peoples. It is not a matter of surprise that new castes and subcastes have sprung and even now are springing into existence which call themselves Brahmins or Kshatriyas or Banias or Shudras according as their occupations may be and according as influence, power and riches lend strength and support to their claim even in the eyes of the orthodox population. Such castes however remain distinct, and are not admitted to marriage relations by older groups. In fact caste has become so rigid that even the older castes are splitting up into subsections on fancied grounds of difference of purity. To the innumerable

castes already existing are added new castes which become self-contained foci, without causing trouble or inconvenience to other castes. In fact just as the religious Pantheon of the Hindus finds no difficulty in admitting new deities within its limits, so new castes are willingly admitted within the fold of Hinduism, but remain distinct and unmixed with older castes.

Sir. H. Risley has enumerated the several ways in which new castes have been formed or are still forming in India. But these do not disprove the truth of the theory as to the origin and development of caste set forth above. On the contrary they lend support to that theory. It can not be denied for a moment that unless in India the Aryans had already developed a caste system as above described the non-Aryans or new tribes would not have been captivated by the temptation to imitate and would not have spontaneously adopted caste restrictions. Let us examine the several types of castes enumerated by Sir H. Risley. *viz.*, first, tribal castes, 2nd, functional castes, 3rd, sectarian castes, 4th, castes formed by crossing, 5th, national castes, 6th, castes formed by migration and 7th, castes formed by changes in custom. It would not be amiss to point out that tribal castes and national castes merge into one another; in fact Sir H. Risley himself quotes the Marathas of the Bombay Presidency under both these heads. Now these types themselves exemplify and substantiate the theory we have put forth. To put it in a nutshell, caste developed from an occupational and racial basis. The pride of blood added to the pride of occupation

led to the formation of caste, and we have first the division into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. That division deriving strength and support from long custom and Vedic recognition has been the predominating and engrossing factor of influence throughout the subsequent social history of India. New tribes whether mixed Aryans or non-Aryans who wish to incorporate themselves with the Hindu society naturally take their rank as Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas who again rank as sub-castes of the original four heads. Thus for instance the Marathas who are probably a mixed Aryan and Dravidian race or tribe divide themselves into Maratha Brahmins, Maratha Kshatriyas, Maratha Vaishyas and Maratha Shudras.* Their introduction is never offensive to the older castes as marriage is already restricted to each sub-caste. Thus have arisen, for example, the ten principal sub-castes into which Brahmins divide themselves and which they do not find inconvenient because none of them intermarry. The chief cause of subdivision would naturally be difference of occupations. Difference of religion,† and difference of habitation similarly would lead to further subdivisions of castes. That new castes are forming or have

* Sir H. Risley, we think, is mistaken when he looks up on the Marathas as being a tribe of only two divisions one which claims to be Kshatriyas and the other Kunabis. The hypergamy of the former was as we have shown the usual custom with all castes formerly as they were allowed to marry below them.

† The Lingayats and even the convert Christians have within recent times split up into Brahmins, Kshatriyas &c., by the inveterate habit of the Indian mind.

recently formed by the process of crossing is, however, the strongest proof of the fact that several intermediate castes sprang up in the manner stated in the *Manu* and other *Smritis* in remote times, which again have ramified into sub-castes by the operation of the several causes above mentioned during the course of centuries.

CHAPTER III.

MARRIAGE.

We saw in the last chapter how the coming together of two races distinguished by the totally different complexions, white and black, gave rise to the phenomenon of caste called originally by the simple appellation "colour," (वर्ण) exactly as in modern days in South Africa and America a similar phenomenon has given occasion to the use of the word colour in the same sense. When we read in newspapers of a coloured deputation proceeding to England from South Africa we are struck by the remarkable irony of events which has invested the word colour with a peculiar meaning. This total divergence in the colour of the two races brought into contact in India in Vedic times gave rise, in the manner already described, to the system of caste based on restriction of marriage coupled with restriction of occupation. The subject of this chapter has thus already been partly anticipated in the previous chapter, but there are many other aspects of the subject which require that it should be treated in detail in a separate chapter, though repetition may here and there be unavoidable.

Marriage was already a sacred institution among the Indo-Aryans when they came to India, though the Mahabharata discloses the fact that at some time

in the remote past there was no marriage at all amongst them. The conversation between Pandu and his queen Kunti when he asks the latter to resort to Niyoga discloses how in former times women were not under any obligation to marry any one but were allowed perfect liberty. The want of brotherly feeling resulting from an absence of the idea of common descent, the way in which old men and women were deserted and other considerations of a like nature led, it is said, to the institution of marriage, and a Rishi ordained that a woman who did not remain loyal to one husband in future would incur the sin of foetus-murder.* The beginning of the epic period, however, seems to have been far removed from this time though the contemporaneous Upanishads also speak of a woman who when asked by her son, who was his father, answered that she had lived with many persons in her youth, and hence could not say what his father's name was. The custom of naming persons after their mothers was perhaps a relic of this time.

The first thing that strikes us prominently is that marrying many wives was the most usual thing in the beginning of the epic period. Dasharatha is said to have had 350 wives though only four

* व्युत्तरन्त्याःपतिं नार्यां अक्षप्रभृति पातकम् ।

भूणहत्यासर्वं धोरे मविष्यत्यमुखावहम् ॥ १० । १२२ । आदि०

But it is also added, be it remembered, that a man who transgresses his fidelity to his wife also incurs the same sin, a rule which unfortunately is paid scant respect to by Indians.

मार्या तथा व्युत्तरतः कौमारव्रजचारिणीम् ।

पतिव्रतामेतदेव मविता पातकं मुवि । १८ । १२२ । आदि०

queens and Ravana is said to have had one thousand wives. Perhaps the greatest offender against modern taste in this respect was Krishna who is said to have had 16,000 consorts, a number which is without doubt greatly exaggerated. It was however a characteristic of the time. His Theban namesake Hercules is said to have married many women and Solomon is said to have had one thousand females in his harem. All this speaks of an age when women were looked upon as prizes, and conquerors were influenced by the natural desire to appropriate to themselves desirable women from among the conquered. The then existing rule which allowed a Brahmin or a Kshatriya to have wives from all castes below him proceeded upon the same basis and acted as an incentive rather than a check to the custom of having many wives. At a time when there was a vast area of unoccupied country and the population was sparse, there was no need of prudential restraints as to the number of wives one should have. The hard struggle for life, which every human being has to wage for subsistence now, makes it undesirable to have many children. But such was not the case then, and wives were taken freely from all ranks for the purpose of progeny. Thus came into existence in India, as has been described in the last chapter, those numerous castes exhibiting different degrees of complexions and possessing different capacities which have come down to this day.

With the fact that polygamy was a common institution at the beginning of the epic period (Duryodhana, Bhima and others having each

many wives*) we have also the instance of polyandry practised by the Pandavas themselves. The later Aryan immigrants living in cold climates, or coming through a difficult country, had few women with them and had consequently to adopt the practice of several men having one common wife. Draupadi's is no doubt a solitary instance of polyandrous marriage in the Mahabharata but we have a line preserved in the poem in which Yudhisthira says that it was the custom of his family, a line which we have already commented on at great length. We are not, therefore, wrong in believing that polyandry prevailed at the beginning of the epic period to a considerable extent among at least the Aryans of the second invasion. The institution of Niyoga also obtained among the Aryans at this time showing how much progeny was prized in those days.

Coupled with these customs *viz.* Niyoga or levirate, polygamy and polyandry evidently denoting a somewhat primitive state of marriage we may expect to find the custom of the re-marriage of widows and even married women. There is thus the mention of Damayanti offering to hold a second Svayamvara but it does not eventually take place and Nala upbraids her for acting like a common woman of uncontrollable passions. Duryodhana again calls upon Draupadi, when won at the disgraceful game at dice, to give up the Pandavas and

* श्यामानां वरवर्णानां गौरीणामेकवाससाम् ।

दुर्योधनवरलीलां पश्य हृन्दानि केसव ॥ स्त्री० १६ । ४६

दाशाहंपुत्रजं वीर श्यामं सत्यविक्रमम् ।

आरोप्याके हृदत्येतामेदिराजपरागताः ॥ स्त्री० २४ । २५

marry any one of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Though this may have been said in jest we may take it that women of low moral calibre were not uncommon who abandoned one husband for the sake of another. Whatever may have been the state of things at the beginning of the epic period, we have however no doubt that the prohibition of widow-remarriage was an established rule at the end of that period.* There are no instances to be found of remarriages of Aryan women in the Mahabharata or in the Ramayana ; and the fact that even among the Germans a tribe is mentioned by Tacitus which did not allow the remarriage of widows may possibly show that the embryo of this custom was with the Aryans themselves from the remotest times. For among no other people in the world is there any record of such a custom having existed at any time. Probably this custom originated among the Aryans from their looking upon it as a sin to marry a woman who was not a virgin. We have a peculiar confirmation of this view in an oath of Arjuna when he vows the death of Jayadratha by the next sunset. "May I go"; said he "to that fate to which those sinful men go, who marry non-virgin women."† A sentiment like this is not unnatural among a chivalrous people full of the pride of blood.

But if the remarriage of widows was not allowed at least towards the close of the epic period and if

* The law was introduced by दीर्घतमा,

एक एव पतिर्नार्या यावज्जीवपरायणम् ।

सुते जीवति वा तस्मिन्नापरं प्राप्नुयान्नरम् ॥ आदि १०८ । ३५ ॥

† मुक्तपूर्वा स्त्रियं ये च विदतामघशंसिनाम् ॥ द्रोण २७ । ७१

the Aryans of India required that their brides should be virgins they also required that they should be grown up girls fit for consummation on the day of marriage. A remarkable verse in the Mahabharata gives very strong and positive proof on this point. It is stated that Draupadi was married formally by religious ceremonies to the five Pandavas on separate days and the poet records it as a miracle that she was a virgin at each time. Now this clearly shows that consummation of the marriage was a necessary part of the marriage ceremony and if that is so the bride was required to be of an age fit for consummation. The description of Draupadi at the time of the Svayamvara positively shows that she was then a grown up girl, Kunti had a son born to her before her marriage. Uttara was pregnant when her husband Abhimanyu died in the great Mahabharata fight a few months after her marriage. Subhadra Abhimanyu's mother was a fully grown up woman at the time of her abduction by Arjuna, and so was in fact every other woman of whom the Mahabharata makes any mention. It is impossible to deny that the marriage of grown up women was the recognised and ordinary custom as well at the beginning as at the end of the epic period so far as we see from the Mahabharata. And the Ramayana in reality tells the same tale though it has been tampered with to some extent to suit modern ideas in this respect. As in Draupadi's case so in that of Sita consummation appears to have followed immediately after the return of the married couple to Ayodhya after marriage and the shloka noted below is very important in this connection, and is pro-

bably a relic from the old nucleus of the Ramayana.*

It is sometimes argued that these are all examples of Kshatriyas, and Rajputs even now with that tenacity with which they have yet preserved most of their customs of epic days still practise late marriage, and consummation almost as a rule immediately follows marriage among them even now. That custom it is urged did not, however, obtain among the Brahmins who observed the Brahma form of marriage principally. But the epics do not contain a single example of the marriage of a Brahmin girl who was not equally grown up with her Kshatriya sister at the time of her marriage. The most notable example is that of Devayani, the self-willed daughter of Shukra. She first made love to Kacha, but being unsuccessful gave herself of her own choice to the gallant king Yayati who had rescued her from drowning. She was evidently quite a grown up woman at the time of her marriage. The instance of a Brahmin girl who remained unmarried till her old age performing austerities found in the Shalya Parva, Chapter 33, is also interesting. Being advised that she must marry if she would go to heaven† she at last married a Rishi at that late age. Other examples of Brahmin girls remaining unmarried until quite grown up are to be found, such as that of the daughter of the sage Bhrigu who was forcibly defiled by Danda‡. In the Anushasana

* अमिवाद्याभिवाद्यां सर्वा राजमुतास्तदा ।

रेमिरे मुदिताः सर्वा मर्त्यमिः सहिता रङ्गः ॥ ११ । ७७ । वा०

† असंस्कृतायाः कन्यायाः कुतो लोकस्तथानये । ११२ । १११ छ०

‡ The following shloka from Chapter 157 आदि, wherein a Brahmin bewails being offered as food to the Baka Rakshasa

Parva the marriageable age of girls is expressly given as the attainment of youth.*

The age of men at the time of marriage must accordingly have been equally advanced. If we grant that *Brahmacharya* was actually practised, and the Vedas actually learnt by heart for 12, 24, or 36 years, we can not but conclude that the marriageable age of males commenced from the 20th at the earliest. The early intercourse of men and women is denounced as one of the worst results of the Kali age, while in the previous ages, it is said, no man knew a woman† before he attained manhood. Men and women thus in the words of Tacitus entered into the marital tie equally matured and well grown up, and naturally produced strong and healthy progeny.

Such a state of marriage customs must inevitably give rise to certain indiscretions on the part of males and females, as may be seen from the instance of Kunti having borne a son before marriage. Again grown up girls were often anxious for being given away, for the right of the father to give a girl in marriage even after the attainment of puberty was always acknowledged and undisputed. The following shloka from the Mahabharata gives an interesting picture of the state of the mind of spinsters analogous to what is found in western countries. "The hope of girls attaining womanhood and anxious shows clearly that Brahmin girls even at the close of the epic period were not married until maturity.

बालामप्राप्तवयसमजातव्यं जनाकृतिम् ।

मर्त्यैर्याय निक्षिप्ता न्यासं धात्रा महात्मना ॥ ३५ ॥

* वयस्था तु महाप्राज्ञ कन्यामावोदुमर्हसि । १२४ । १४४

† न च स्त्रियं प्रजानाति कश्चिदप्राप्तयौवनः अनु०

to be given away on hearing a talk about their marriage is leaner than myself,"* The virtue of grown up girls however was strictly guarded by law and religion. We find from the Manusmriti that to destroy the virginity of a girl in any manner was treated as a serious offence, even though committed with the consent of the girl. In the Mahabharata we find it stated that a girl who got her virginity sullied had one third of the sin of *Brahmacharya* while the man who sullied it got the rest of it.†

We thus see that late marriages were prevalent among the Aryans of India throughout the epic period with suitable rules guarding the preservation of the virtue and the virginity of girls and we may add even the *Brahmacharya* of boys. It is indeed a most remarkable feature of the then existing state of society which distinguishes it from the present state which insists upon the early marriage of boys and girls. How the institution of child marriage gradually came into vogue during the Buddhistic period of Indian history, especially towards its close, i. e., from 600 to 1000 A. D., we have shown elsewhere. But we cannot help observing here that the beginning of that custom of child marriage was noticed even at the close of the epic period. There is no evidence of it in the epics, but there is the evidence of the Greek historians who visited India at this time. It is recorded that in the south there

* प्रदानकाक्षिणीनां च कन्यानां वयसि स्थिते ।

भुत्वा कथास्तथायुक्ताःसाक्षा कृशतरी मया ॥ १८ । १२८ । शा०

† विमार्गं ब्रह्महत्यायाः कन्या प्राप्नोति दुष्यती ।

यस्तु दूषयिता तस्याः शेषं प्राप्नोति पाप्मनः ॥ ४३ । १.०६ अञ्जु.

were some people who married and cohabited with girls at the age of seven, and that they did not live long but usually died before 40. Perhaps this was one of those grotesque exaggerations which the Greeks readily swallowed as evidencing many unusual things that existed in this far off country, similar to the belief in one-legged human beings and others who covered themselves with their ears. From the recorded statement however, we may draw two conclusions; first that the early marriages of girls and the early consummation of their marriage were then looked upon as a rare and unnatural thing, and secondly that the institution of child marriage which evidently lies hidden under this exaggerated belief originated in the south and among some non-Aryan Dravidian races. It is remarked by Herbert Spencer that early maturity characterises some low types of people, and it is possible that the custom of child marriage existed even then among some aboriginal people in the south of the Indian continent.

Speaking of the aboriginal peoples we have to notice other customs relating to marriage which were probably the result of imitation of the customs of the aborigines. We have already spoken of the eight forms of marriage enumerated by the Smṛiti writers. The first four forms of marriage in effect marked the different stages of the development of the institution among the Aryans of India. The Devas were the remote ancestors, the Prajapatis the patriarchs and the Rishis the immediate ancestors of the Indo-Aryans; while the Brahma form of marriage was its last development amongst

the Brahmanical Aryans of the Gangetic valley. This form was in effect a gift of the bride to the bridegroom who was also given many presents in consecration of the gift. The three other forms were the different stages in the development of the idea of marriage from sale to gift. For that was the previous idea of marriage among the Aryans, the daughter being looked upon as a chattel which the father had the right to dispose of. That idea and form of marriage prevailed among the Asuras or the ancient Iranians, and was hence called the Asura form. It was practised in the days of the Greeks by some tribes of the Punjab who with remarkable tenacity had still preserved their Trans-Indus customs. We have noticed the examples of Madri and Kaikeyi as brides who were given away for large presents. The Madras and the Kaikeyas were kindred tribes who inhabited the Punjab. Curiously enough the companions of Alexander discovered the traces of a similar custom even in their days in Taxila. "Grown up maidens" observes Arrian "were exposed for sale in Taxila. Their shoulders were bared when a purchaser appeared, and they were sold to the highest bidder." It would however appear that in obedience to the sentiment of the Smritis this form of marriage was considered debased and existed in rare places only. The Kathai and the Sopheites who may be said to be the representatives of the epic Madras and Kaikeyas had different customs of marriage in the days of Alexander. Among the Kathai the women chose their husbands and in the country of Sopheites beauty was prized very highly and brides were given or selected only

on considerations of beauty without any reference to dowry.*

This brings us to the next form of marriage *viz.*, the Swayamvara. It was of two kinds. The bride selected her husband merely from choice or she was given to a bridegroom who won in a particular tournament. The former custom was probably taken up by the Aryans from the Gandharvas an aboriginal race and the most typical instance of this kind of marriage in the Mahabharata is that of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. The latter form however was the most favourite one among the chivalrous Aryan Kshatriyas, and even Brahmins sometimes competed in the tournaments held for the hand of a king's daughter. Archery was the favourite military practice of the Aryans and Draupadi was won at a tournament in archery. Sita was also similarly vowed to be given away to him who would bend a heavy bow. This custom still survived at the close of the epic period, as Greek writers record the existence of that custom† in their days.

We come next to the Rakshasa form of marriage. It was, like the Gandharva form, specially permitted to the military class as it was a great incentive in the profession of arms. In the Rakshasa form the bridegroom was allowed to abduct by force the daughter

* Invasion of India by Alexander- Mac Crindle p. 280.

† Arrian observes. " They marry without either giving or taking dowries; but the women as soon as they are marriageable are brought forward by their fathers and exposed in public to be selected by the victor in wrestling or boxing or by some one who excels in any other manly exercise." (Mac Crindle's Megasthenes and Arrian page 222) Megasthenes also notices the Arsha form of marriage which was still surviving when he says that brides are often purchased for a pair of oxen (Ditto page 71)

of a Kshatriya whether she was a willing party or not, and the captor was allowed to appropriate her if her father or other relatives could not defeat and chastise him. The capture of Subhadra was of this kind, for in the Mahabharata she is not represented as a consenting party. The Vrishnis, Subhadra's relatives, did not pursue Arjuna being prevented from doing so by Krishna who counselled that there was not much hope for success and who alone from among them was cognisant of the deed and had connived at it. The rape of Sita is another instance but it is that of a married woman and not an unmarried one. Perhaps the laws of capture allowed even married women to be taken away, of course after defeating or slaying the husband. Probably this was a custom among the Rakshasas and not among the Aryans who had, as previously stated, a peculiar notion in favour of virgins as the only eligible women fit for marriage. This form of marriage was in either case called the Rakshasa form as it prevailed among the Rakshasas. The seizure of Draupadi by Jayadratha during the exile of the Pandavas at a time when they had gone out a-hunting is a third instance of this kind, and the following utterance of Dhaumya gives an interesting exposition of the manners and notions of the time. "You can not take her away without conquering the great charioteers, her husbands. Respect, Oh Jayadratha, the duty of Kshatriyas as it is known from ancient times."* In short old custom amongst the Kshatriyas allowed even married women to be

* नेयं शक्या त्वया नेतुमविजित्य महात्पथात् ।

धर्म क्षत्रस्य पीराणमवेक्ष्य जयद्रथ ॥ २६ । २६८ वन०

carried away after their husbands were defeated. The Rakshasa, like the Gandharva form, was specially permitted to the Kshatriyas alone, and appears to have been largely in vogue amongst them.

Lastly we come to the Paishacha form which was probably prevalent among the Pishachas a wild and uncivilised aboriginal race which lived on human corpses. They were so low in the scale of civilization that not only was there no marriage among them, but the race was propagated by acts of sexual intercourse committed by force or stealth and this kind of appropriation was probably allowed in rare cases among the Aryans, out of regard for the protection of the character of the woman. A woman on whom a rape had been committed was irrevocably the wife of the guilty man. It is thus that it came to be honoured with the name of marriage and is the lowest of these eight forms of marriage enumerated even in the Mahabharata.

These forms of marriage were no doubt prevalent at the same time among different castes of Aryans or non-Aryans, being copied from one another by contact. Several restrictions on marriage which came into vogue in consequence of the same contact have already been noticed. Although, thus, the first three castes were allowed to have wives from the castes below them, men of lower castes were not allowed to marry women of the higher castes. The Shudras especially were not allowed to marry Brahmin or Kshatriya wives, and the progeny of such unions, if any took place, were condemned to live a life of degradation and ignominy. The Brahmins also declared themselves against marrying Shudra

wives. The Mahabharata has in several places condemned the Brahmins who took Shudra wives. They were called by the opprobrious name of Vrishalipatis or husbands of Shudra women. The progeny of such marriages was not however under any disability. The man who married a Shudra woman was alone held to have committed a sin and to have forfeited his rights as a Brahmin and was even condemned to go to hell. In the imprecation of Arjuna referred to already we have also the oath, that he might go to the place reserved for the Vrishalipati or the husband of a Shudra woman, if he did not carry out his threat of destroying Jayadratha next day.

To take a resume ; at the beginning of the epic period, the Aryans of India had already developed the institution of marriage, though it might have been in its infant stage among the surrounding aboriginal races. The Uttara Kurus* for instance even at the time of the Pandavas, had no marriage institution at all, a fact which may have given rise to that exaggerated report which Herodotus has thought fit to record viz., that the Indians copulated openly like cattle. Polygamy, polyandry and levirate (*Niyoga*) were practised among the Aryans. The usual form of marriage was that of a nominal purchase which was developing into a gift pure and simple among the

* अनाहताः किल पुरा त्रिय आसन् वरानने ।

कामचारा विहारिण्यः स्वतंत्राश्चरद्वासिनि ॥ ८ ॥

प्रमाणदृष्टो बभौर्ष पूज्यते च महर्षिभिः ।

उत्तरेषु च रभोर कुल्यस्यापि पूज्यते ॥ ९ ॥ आदि० ११२

If the UttaraKurus are identified with the Tibetans the remark may well apply to them even now.

Brahmins, and self-choice or Svayamvara amongst the Kshatriyas. The sentiment of racial pride, confronted as the Aryans were by a black aboriginal population, gave rise to many restrictions, conditions and forms of marriage such as the prohibition of *Pratiloma* marriage or hypergamy as it is called. Virginity in brides was greatly prized. Widows however were allowed to remarry in a lower condition, and child marriages were practically unknown. The epic period preserved these customs and forms of marriage throughout, though it is possible to surmise that the Brahma form of marriage, monogamy and the prohibition of remarriage of widows were coming into general favour. The end of the epic period was marked by marriages by sale, by the nominal price of a pair of oxen, marriages by results of tournaments and the prohibition of marriage outside the caste.

We shall now go on to consider the position of wives during the epic period. It may naturally be expected that at the beginning of that period their position must have been freer and more respected than at its close. When women were grown up at the time of marriage, when they were usually given away for presents, when they selected their own partners in life, and when they could give up their husbands and remarry though in a less religious form, they must have enjoyed greater consideration than when they were given away to a husband with presents in addition and had no possible existence outside his. And we find that such was actually the case. The independence of character depicted in the case of Draupadi is far different from

the position which she herself assigns to a good wife in a chapter in the Vanaparva which has probably been interpolated by Sauti. The latter was undoubtedly the ideal of a wife recognized at the close of the epic period. That is the ideal which survives to this day, perhaps in a still further debased form.

Let us scan the ideal of a good wife, as Vyasa the original poet tries to delineate it in the character of Draupadi. She is a grown up lady at the time of the marriage, strong in body and in mind, and comes forward fearlessly in the assemblage of princes collected at Kampilya to try their hand at the bow for her sake. She does not lose her presence of mind when Karna steps forward to take up the bow, and tells him that she is not prepared to marry below her rank. She gladly accepts Arjuna disguised as a Brahmin as her husband when he wins in the tournament and follows him unmurmuringly to his humble habitation. She shows the energy and strength of her character when she is gambled away, of course in her absence, and is afterwards brought to the gaming hall as a slave. Without losing courage at her desperate condition she tries to ascertain her legal position in a manner which shows that she knows law and Shashtra well enough. She is often called *Brahmavadini* and *Pandita* by the poet and seems to have been a well educated lady. She discusses the political situation with her husbands in their exile and is often consulted by them and gives fearless advice at all the councils of the family. In short she is not the Andromache of Hector fit only to be loved and employed at the distaff. During her trials at Virata's house she behaves courageously

and emerges out of the trial unscathed and triumphant by the energy of her will and the strength of her virtue.

Let us on the other hand see what ideal of a good wife she is herself made to preach at the end of the epic period. In chapter 263 of the Vana Parva Draupadi explains to Satyabhama how she pleases her husbands and makes them love her. "Leaving aside pride and anger I always serve my husbands with their other wives. I am always afraid of speaking a bad word, standing in a bad posture, glancing in a bad manner, sitting in a bad position and going to a bad place and I avoid guessing the intentions of my husbands. I do not look at another man, be he a god or a young well-decked man or a rich or noble person. I do not take food before my husband dines or sleep before he goes to bed. Whenever my husband returns from the field or the forest or the village (here Draupadi is clearly not speaking of the queen of the Pandavas but of an ordinary woman) I always stand up and receive him with offerings of water and a seat. I wash the pots clean, prepare food well, give it to my husband at the proper time, preserve the provisions carefully and keep the house well swept. I do not keep company with bad women and giving up idleness always strive to please my husbands. I avoid jesting or laughter or standing in the front door or frequenting public places or keeping long in the compound of my house. When my husband goes away on a journey for the sake of the family I put on neither flowers nor pigment. I do not take what my husband does not drink or eat or like. I observe the family customs

carefully. I serve my husbands as though they are infuriated serpents. I do not try to excel them or eat or do better than they. I try to please my mother-in-law and serve her myself with food, drink and clothes. I do not cavil at her or appear better dressed or decked. I serve guests and Brahmins carefully and know every thing which is done by the servants beginning with the goat-herd or cowherd. I watch carefully the income and expenditure of the house. In fact I work day and night in the discharge of these burdensome duties of the family regardless of my own happiness. I rise before my husbands and go to sleep after them ; that is the charm, in one word, I use in order to make my husbands love me." This is indeed a remarkably beautiful picture of what a wife should be to her husband and in the family but the picture is not a sufficiently elevated one and it does not come up to the ideal of a wife who is the partner of her husband in his joy and grief and who assists him in the various duties of his low or exalted position. But the ideal is one which has made the Indian women peculiarly happy and useful in the homely family life of an average Indian. It has also enabled them to be never ambitious and to be contented with their lot wherever it may be cast. The Indian women are also proverbially virtuous. The high ideals of Sita and Draupadi, Savitri and Damayanti have ever been the never failing spring which keeps virtue alive among the Indian women.

The Greek historians are not, however, very eloquent in the praise of the virtue of Indian women. They often remark that the women of the country

are willing to sell their favours to any man but at the high price of an elephant.* It is observed in another place that the Indians marry many women "some hoping that they would be obedient attendants and others for pleasure and to fill their house with children." The natural result is as the writer goes on to point out that "the wives prostitute themselves unless their chastity is enforced by compulsion."† Now this sort of immorality especially among women confined by force within the precincts of a harem is not at all strange and must have existed all along throughout the epic period. We have already noticed the strange line in the Mahabharata which states that of the thousands of widows of Krishna that were being escorted away by Arjuna after his death many were carried away by force while "some actually went of their free will." It is an inevitable consequence of the custom of marrying many women usually obtained by force or for money and it is not at all strange that the Greeks have left recorded an observation similar to that of the shrewd and fearless Vyasa.

The Greeks did not advance beyond the Punjab and had personal knowledge of that country only. It is, therefore, possible to suggest that the freer and bolder women of the Punjab gave a somewhat wrong idea to the Greeks about the virtue of the Indian women generally. The position of these women differed essentially from that of women in India proper as we shall show in a subsequent chapter and outsiders in a country where women

* Megasthenes and Arrian by Mac. Crindle p. 222.

† Ditto p. 71.

are allowed more liberty than is allowed in their own, often carry away wrong impressions about the virtue of its women as it is the case even in these days. It may perhaps be on this account, therefore, that the Greeks thought the virtue of the Indian women not very strong or invulnerable.

Whatever that may be, it is certain that the custom of Sati existed in the days of the Greeks and is noticed by their historians. It is recorded especially of the Kathians that among them women burned themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Unable to explain how women could have the self-denial to so burn themselves some Greek writers made the surmise that the custom was introduced by the Indians in order that women might not poison their husbands*. The surmise was suggested to them by the low estimate they entertained of the virtue of the Indian women. But Mac Crindle in a note on Sati at page 269 quotes Diodorus himself who states that the two widows of Ketius, an Indian general who fell in the battle of Gabiene between Eumenes and Antigonus, contended for the honour of being burned on the funeral pile of their husband and that the younger was selected for the distinction as the elder being at the time with child was precluded by law from immolating herself. "Strabo says that Aristobulus and other writers make mention of Indian women burning themselves voluntarily with their husbands." It is, therefore, difficult to deny that the custom must have existed from a very long time before the invasion of India by Alexander for it would not

* Invasion of India by Alexander by Mac Crindle—Diodorus—page 279.

have been followed voluntarily unless there was a peculiar sentiment of hallowed sanctity about it. It is not clear, however, if the custom existed at the beginning of the epic period. We have no doubt the mention of Madri burning herself on the funeral pyre of Pandu; and curiously enough Madri belonged to the Madra people whom we have already identified with the Kathians of the Greek writers, amongst whom they particularly marked the custom of Sati. It is also stated that some of the widows of Krishna burned themselves but that is very probably a version of the last recast of the Mahabharata. For we are surprised to find that there is no mention of any of Duryodhana's widows burning herself with his dead body; though in the Striparva a host of his wives is described as mourning his death on the battle-field. Perhaps the original Mahabharata did not mention any wife of Duryodhana by name and did not intend to bring any to the reader's notice for poetical reasons which we have mentioned elsewhere. It may further be added that negative evidence of this kind is not of much value and it is possible that the custom of Sati may have been as old as the beginning of the epic period. There is not the slightest doubt, however, that the custom grew into prominence during the epic period and was in full vogue at its close as it was noticed by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander to India. The contrary opinion propounded by Mr. Dutta that the custom came into vogue after the Scythian invasion of India in the second century B. C. is thus, as shown by MacCrindle himself, disproved by evidence dating from before that invasion.

CHAPTER V.

Food.

If the Indo-Aryans of the beginning of the epic period differed to some extent from their descendants of the days of Alexander in marriage customs, in physique and in complexion they were equally or perhaps to a greater extent differentiated from the latter in the matter of food. A great change came over the people of India whether Aryans or mixed Aryans during the epic period in this behalf and the change can be clearly traced from the Upanishads through the epics down to the Manusmriti. It was a change for the better and also for the worse. Morally and spiritually speaking, who can deny that a people who voluntarily and through religious motives gave up animal food and adopted vegetarianism are entitled to our praise and admiration and yet who can deny that the people of India have done so, in the immortal words of MaxMuller, only at the sacrifice of their political independence? We shall try in the following pages to show how the epics evidence a change in the food of the people from various causes. The passage already quoted from the Brihadarany Upanishad of the Vajasaneyins is important in this connection also. It concludes with this sentence "He who desires to

Didimbha, two powerful gymnasts, in his service and it was only after their death that Bhima and Krishna thought it possible to overthrow him. The king of Virata had similarly several gymnasts in his employ the head of them being Kichaka, who was killed by Bhima for making love to Draupadi. In fact at a time when physical strength was of great use in fights and even battles, it is not at all strange that the attainment of great strength was regularly and carefully attended to among the Aryans of ancient India. Thus Duryodhana was himself a great gymnast and only a gymnast could fight with the mace. Combating with the mace was a favourite exercise among the ancient Aryans. Fighting with elephants was also another art in which the ancient Aryans took delight. Impossible as it may appear in these days the art, as we shall hereafter show, was one which was practically developed by the intrepid Aryans to a wonderful extent and further induced them to invigorate their bodies and to increase their agility.

Born of parents who were well developed at the time of marriage and hardened by suitable exercise, the Indo-Aryans like the Spartans were a race of men of great physical strength and development. They kept up this reputation for strength throughout the epic period. The historians of Alexander's conquests in India are forced to admit that "of all the Asiatics the Indians were superior in strength and stature."* The great stature and powerful frame

* Arrian's Alexander by MacCrindle page 85. "They were of so great a stature that they were among the tallest men in Asia being five cubits in height or nearly so."

of Porus struck wonder and admiration even in Alexander's breast and coupled with his courage were instrumental in securing for him that kingly treatment for which he was so anxious before laying down his arms. The Indians of the Punjab and the upper Gangetic valley are as a rule even now tall and strong.

The Greek historians however record that the Indians were slender in frame.* They were not perhaps as heavy as the Greeks or the Germans. It is strange that a people who are usually given to gymnastics even in these days should have been slender in frame. It is, however, a remark which well applies to the Rajputs even now though it does not properly apply to the Jats. Possibly the great change in food which took place during the epic period, as we shall show in the next chapter, led to this slenderness of frame or it may be that the climate of India produced that effect. Be it as it may, it is not possible to deny that at the end of the epic period the people of northern India were usually as slender as they are now.

As the Greeks were pleased with the stature and dimensions of Porus, they were pleased with the great stature coupled with manly beauty of Sophites† which name is usually identified with that of the Ashvapati of the Ramayana. It is recorded of the people of the kingdom of Sophites that they were extremely fond of beauty of person; and any

* The Indians are in person slender and tall and of much lighter weight than any other men. Arrian-ditto page 221.

† He was distinguished above all the barbarians by his tall and handsome figure. Arrian's Alexander, page 220,

ugly child that was born used to be destroyed* amongst them. Kaikeyi, the beautiful wife of Dasharatha, came of this race and Madri, the mother of the handsomest Pandava, Nakula, was a daughter of the king of the Madras who were a kindred people. Some of the Indo-Aryans of the Punjab are even now a people of remarkably fine features and it is not at all strange that their ancestors should have struck the Greeks as a handsome people.

In complexion, however, the Aryans of India had suffered a great change. Probably at the beginning of the epic period they were a fair-skinned people. Of the great heroes and actors of the Mahabharata legend none is dark-skinned except Krishna and Arjuna, the heroine Draupadi and the poet Vyasa who wrote the immortal poem. We can explain their dark complexion only on the supposition that these Aryans of the second invasion were not only a little darker in complexion than the previous wave of settlers but their progeny had, on account of the great mixture of races to which they had very little objection, naturally changed greatly in complexion. In fact the black colour was beginning to grow into popular favour at this very time and later ideas have made it blue which is the colour popularly ascribed to Krishna.

There is a remarkable passage in the Upanishads which goes to show that at the beginning of the epic period the black colour was actually coming into prominence and favour though the generality of the

* If there is any thing deformed or defective in the limbs of a child they order it to be killed. Invasion of India by Alexander—Curtius page 219 by MacCrindle.

Indo-Aryans were a fair-complexioned people. In the Brihadaranya Upanishad of the Vajasaneyins the following curious passage occurs in Chapter 8 Brahmana 4. "He who desires to have a son fair in complexion, learned in one Veda and long-lived should eat rice cooked in milk and mixed with clarified butter. He who wishes to have a son yellow in complexion, learned in two Vedas and long-lived should eat rice cooked in curds &c. He who wishes to have a son *dark* in complexion and with red eyes, learned in three Vedas and long-lived should eat rice cooked in water &c." It is clear from the above that the learned Brahmin was gradually changing his colour, that a Brahmin who was learned in one Veda only was usually fair and one who was learned in three Vedas was dark in complexion. There is doubtless a clear indication here that the Brahmins of mixed parentage like Vyasa were dark in colour and at the same time more learned than their brethren of the Punjab. The passage is important in two other points and we shall have to quote it again in another connection.

By the end of the epic period the Indians had, so far as the generality was concerned, changed colour so much that they were now a pre-eminently black people. The mixture of races in the beginning and the influence of climate through a period of three thousand years had made the Indians a race as "black as the Ethiopians in complexion." That is the way how Herodotus describes them. Herodotus knew India and the Indians through the Persians and had perhaps very exaggerated reports about the blackness of the people. Not only were the people

black but according to his information their very semen was black. We can only treat this as an inflation so natural to reports which always tend to invest distant people with marvellous attributes. But there is not the least doubt that the bulk of the Indian population was at this time as black in complexion as it is now. The modern Rajputs are mostly dark, though the people who inhabit the colder regions of India are still fair and were equally so in the days of Alexander.*

The complexions of the several Pandavas and their wives are given in a chapter, probably interpolated, in the Ashramavasi Parva, where they are described in detail ostensibly for the information of the ascetics who surrounded the blind, sage monarch Dhritarashtra and perhaps for his edification also. There are many other places also in the Mahabharata where the complexions of the Pandavas are similarly noticed. It will perhaps interest the reader to know the complexions of the several Pandavas and we quote the description in the Ashramavasi Parva noticed above. "Here is the emperor Yudhishtira king of the Kurus as fair as pure gold, big in dimensions like a great lion, with a big nose, large long and red eyes. Here again is Bhima walking like an elephant in rut, fair as pure gold with broad and big shoulders and round long arms. By his side walks the great archer Arjuna dark, young, looking like the leader of an elephant herd, with shoulders high like those of a lion and eyes like a lotus.

* Ktesias ascribes the dark colour of the Indians to the influence of the hot sun and avers that he himself saw white Indians, two women and five men, MacCrindle Ancient India Ktesias page 78.

The two young men standing by Kunti are the twin-sons of Madri looking like Vishnu and Indra, as in the whole world of mankind there is none who can equal them in beauty, valour and right conduct. Here is again Draupadi approaching elderly appearance with eyes large like a lotus-petal and with a lustrous dark complexion resembling the colour of a blue lotus, looking like the heavenly goddess Lakshmi herself. By her side is Subhadra the sister of Krishna who is fair as gold and formed as it were of the essence of the moon. Here is another wife of Arjuna being the daughter of the Naga king fair as pure gold. Here is also Chitrangada daughter of the Pandya king whose complexion is like the colour of a wet Madhuka flower. Here is the chief wife of Bhima and daughter of the commander-in-chief of the king's army who vied with Krishna, with complexion as dark as a garland of blue lotuses. By her side is the wife of Nakula dark as a blue lotus and also the daughter of Jarasandha as fair as pure gold and the wife of the younger son of Madri. Behind them is the daughter of the Virata king and the widow of Abhimanyu slain in battle, as fair as heated gold, accompanied by her son. And here are other white-robed ladies the widows of the Kauravas slain in battle."

This description shows that four of the Pandavas were fair, not white but yellow, as the poet usually compares the colour to that of purified gold. Arjuna was dark, so was Draupadi and some other wives of the Pandavas were also dark the complexion being usually compared by the poet to the colour of a blue lotus. It is a pleasing dark complexion which

we do not see now-a-days in any living being and which may perhaps exist in the poet's imagination only. Certain it is, however, that both men and women were frequently dark among the mixed Aryans of the epic period. The female complexion that was however most admired was the yellow and it is possible that the white complexion of the original Aryans shaded by the dark complexion of the aborigines gave rise to a peculiar complexion among the mixed classes which was akin to yellowishness. It is impossible not to admire the yellow complexion of some handsome people in modern India. It is a peculiarly Indian complexion and especially among females its brilliancy is remarkable. That is the prevailing complexion of modern Indian ladies and that is the complexion which the last editor of the Mahabharata frequently admires in such expressions as "fair or *gaura* like molten gold." The purely white complexion of the original Indo-Aryans can however still be seen in India among some people of the Himalayan districts and in some exceptional cases in several castes of modern India. Such fair-complexioned persons as fair as the Greeks, were marked even in the days of Alexander.

This gradual change of colour which came over the Aryan and the mixed Aryan races is noted in the following very important shloka in the Mahabharata. "In the Kritayuga the complexion of Vishnu was white in Treta it was yellow in Dvapara it became red while in the Kaliyuga it is black."* We can now well understand how the

* श्वेतः कृतयुगे वर्णः पीतश्चेतायुगे मम ।

रक्तो द्वापरमासाद्य कृष्णः कलियुगे तथा ॥ वन० १८९-३२

complexion changed from the original white of the Indo-Aryans to the black of some modern representatives of them under the influence of mixture of blood with the black aborigines, of change of food and of the sultry and hot climate of the plains of northern and southern India.

The complexion of Rama is believed to have been dark or blue as that of Krishna. It is difficult to believe that it was so. Not only is it historically impossible but it is opposed to the above shloka itself which embodies the prevailing notion at the time of the last recasting of the Mahabharata at least and which shows that the colour of Vishnu in Dvapara was red and not dark. As we have shown elsewhere Rama was not yet fully an Avatara of Vishnu and hence in popular belief he was not yet dark. But as his identification with Krishna became by and by complete his complexion also underwent a change and he is now believed to have been dark like the petal of a blue lotus.

It is strange that throughout the Mahabharata or the Ramayana we have no mention of the complexion popularly called wheat-coloured which is the complexion of the majority of the Indians in these days. The epics speak of the molten gold yellow or the camphor-like white or else the blue lotus dark. The wheat colour is conspicuous by its absence and it is so probably because both the poets and the Greeks loved to speak only of the most conspicuous complexions not caring to mention the commonplace complexion of the generality. We cannot but believe that the complexion of the generality was then as now a blend of the yellow

and the dark which is popularly known as the wheat colour. When Arab historians speak of the plain being covered over with blackness referring to its being spread over by an Indian army or when Herodotus speaks of the Indians as being as black as the Ethiopians we may take it that they are only applying to the generality of the Indians what must have been marked in a conspicuous few.

A similar tendency natural enough to poets if not to historians has prevented the epics from describing the lineaments of the generality of the people belonging to the epic period. Whenever they speak of a great person they speak of a fine nose and lotus-like eyes which expressions do not give us any idea of the features of the Aryans of India. We may however infer from these descriptions that large eyes and prominent noses were looked upon as the necessary ingredients of beauty of face. Tall stature was also a mark of beauty and strength; "tall and straight-grown as a young teak tree" is the usual expression used by the epic writers in describing their heroes. Broad-chested and big-shouldered are also other favourite epithets applied to males and high-breasted and broad-hipped are almost invariably used when referring to female beauty.

We have attempted in the foregoing pages to describe so far as possible the physical characteristics of the Indo-Aryans from the descriptions, generally poetical, of the actors given in the epics as well as from the notices, usually exaggerated, which are to be found on such points in the writings of the Greeks who accompanied Alexander. We will close

this chapter by adding a few observations on the longevity of the people. The Greek writers have recorded that the Indians attained great ages.* People who had lived above a hundred years were not then uncommon.† The epics no doubt speak of fabulous ages in the previous cycles, but they tell us that in the Kali age man lived usually about a hundred years though in Krita he may have lived 400 or in the Treta 300 or in the Dvapara 200 years. Drona is in one place said to have been 400 years old but that is a wrong interpretation of the word अश्रुतिपञ्चकः which would be better rendered by 85. The ages of the Pandavas are not very long. Krishna alone is said to have lived 120 years and this is not at all strange. The following shloka however tells us plainly that men lived what they do now in the most favoured countries and that their vigour did not last longer than may ordinarily be expected. In the Shantiparva Bhishma tells Yudhishtira that “a Suta or story-teller and a Puranika or Purana reciter should be 50 years old, of well developed intellect and not jealous.”‡ Then again “those who are twenty or thirty years old now will all certainly die before the end of a century”§ shows that at the

* Ingonus states that the Cyni, a people of India, live to their hundred and fortieth year.

† Crates of Pergamum calls the Indians who had lived a hundred years and more Gymnætæ but many call them Macrobiî Pliny in Ancient India by Mac Crindle p. 114.

‡ अष्टाभिश्च गुणैर्युक्तं सतं पौराणिकं तथा ।

पञ्चाशद्वर्षवयसं प्रगल्भमनसयकम् ॥ श। ८५-९

§ ये तु विसृतिवर्षा वै त्रिंशद्वर्षाश्च मानवाः ।

अवांगेव हि ते सर्वे मरिष्यन्ति शरब्धसात् ॥ श। १०४-२०

utmost men were expected to live 120 or 130 years. In the Vedas the usual span of human life is taken to be one hundred years and even in the epics except in some plainly exaggerated cases human life is not supposed to be longer in any age at least in this age of Kali. We may, therefore, take it that the Indo-Aryans during the epic period no doubt enjoyed long lives generally but were as a matter of fact not longer lived than the generality of people under the most favourable conditions of life in the west or even in the east in these days.

CHAPTER IV.

PHYSIQUE AND COMPLEXION.

From the subject of the previous chapter we are naturally led to the subject of this chapter; for it is not strange that the Indo-Aryans living in the Punjab and the Gangetic valley and observing marriage institutions which favoured the production of healthy children were a race of strong men and women. Megasthenes, however, attributes the physical superiority of the Indians to another cause. He observes "The inhabitants having abundant means of subsistence exceed in consequence the ordinary stature and are distinguished by their proud bearing." (MacCrindle's Megasthenes page 31). The prodigious strength of Bhima and Jarasandha may be a mythological exaggeration but there is not the least doubt that not only were the Aryans strong and powerful but they actually loved to be so and adopted special measures to prevent the deterioration of their race and even to improve their physique. Athletics as an art soon acquired perfection amongst the Aryans and to this day athletics are the delight of the people, especially of the Punjab. Balarama and Krishna were both great athletes and Kansa the King of Mathura whom Krishna killed maintained two great gymnasts whom Krishna had first to destroy before he dared to attack their master. Jarasandha too had Hansa and

have a son unvanquished in the assembly of Pandits and the speaker of a speech respected by all, who can explain all the Vedas and lives a long life, should eat rice cooked with flesh and clarified butter ; whether the flesh be that of a bull or a ram." This is a most remarkable sentence which, whatever may be said of the efficacy of the recipe, clearly shows that in the opinion of the Indo-Aryans of the beginning of the epic period a beef-eating people were believed to be a people vigorous not only in body but also in mind. We thus find that flesh was the usual and the most favourite food of the people and that the flesh of bulls and rams was most prized for its imparting vigour to the brain.

The Mahabharata clearly supports the same theory. In the Ashvamedha of Yudhishtira performed after the great war Vyasa relates that birds, brutes and chiefly oxen as prescribed in the Shastras and aquatic animals were sacrificed.* And it is also related that the people saw no end of the several kinds of sweet foods that were prepared and of the animals that were killed.† In fact the festivities at which thousands and lakhs of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and others were feasted were of the most bacchanalian kind and perhaps did not differ much from the feasts of the voracious beef-eating Germans, the brother Aryans of the west, whether in the number

* तं तं देवं समुद्दिश्य पक्षिणः पशवश्च ये ।
 ऋषयः शास्त्रपठितास्तथा जलचराश्च ये ।
 सर्वास्तानम्यमुंजस्ते तत्राग्निचयकर्मणि ॥ ३४ । ८८ । अथ०

† भक्षयन्त्याङ्गरायाणां क्रियतां मुच्यतां तथा ।
 पशूनां वध्यतां चैव नानां ददृशुरे जनाः ॥ ४१ । ८९ । अथ०

of animals that were killed or of the flasks of wine that were drunk.*

The descriptions of the festivities at the Ashva-medha must have struck the last editor of the Mahabharata who lived after the rise of Vaiṣṇavism, Jainism and Buddhism as strange and uncouth and we find that these festivities are actually cried down in a chapter subsequently interpolated at this very place. The story of the golden-headed Nakula which is here introduced is evidently given for the purpose of decrying animal food and animal sacrifice showing them to be inferior to the merit of the simple gift of a handful of *saktus* to a hungry guest in times of famine. The episode is illustrative of the change of feeling that had come over the generality of the people about the end of the epic period.

But the controversy does not end here. The Kshatriyas then as now were inveterate in their old sentiments and were still addicted to their old habits of food and sacrifice. We have an answer in the next chapter put in after this to satisfy the sentiments of these people. Janamejaya asks the question why and how it was that a Nakula could dare to condemn a sacrifice which was celebrated by the emperor Yudhisthira with the assistance of learned sages like Vyasa and others. The answer given is remarkably clear on this point. Vaishampayana relates the following story; "Indra was once performing a sacrifice. When the time came for the killing of the animals that were ordained for the sacrifice the great sages seeing the piteous looks

* मुरारिदेवसागरः अथ० ८९-३९

of the animals were moved with compassion and said to Indra 'This is not a righteous sacrifice; for slaughter is against righteousness.* But Indra for infatuation did not consent and there was a great dispute between Indra and the Rishis as to whether one should sacrifice with animate or inanimate offerings. By common consent they referred the dispute to king Vasu (of the Chedis, the progenitor of the several founders of the Aryan kingdoms of the new race referred to in chapter I). He declared that one should sacrifice with whatever could be obtained. The king of the Chedis went, however, to the lowest depth of the earth for having thus carelessly decided the question." Strangely enough the controversy is not yet ended. Popular feeling may be satisfied by mere gifts instead of sacrifices or by sacrifices with grain or milk. The Kshatriyas, however, were not so to be answered and they continued to sacrifice as before. The Ashvamedha sacrifice as we know from history was a favourite sacrifice with the orthodox Kshatriyas who strove to follow the illustrious examples of Yudhisthira and Janamejaya and thus to emphasise the assumption of imperial dignity. We find that Pushpamitra who became the Hindu emperor of India after the dynasty of the Buddhist emperor Ashoka was overthrown performed a great Ashvamedha. The Brahmins were thus compelled to admit the legality or righteousness of animal sacrifices and accordingly in the next chapter after this we have

* नायं धर्मकृतो यज्ञो नार्हिमा धर्मं उच्यते ।

यज वेदेः महानास त्रिवर्षपरमोचितैः ॥ १६ । ११ अश्व०

the story of a sacrifice by the sage Agastya. He insisted on performing a twelve years sacrifice with inanimate offerings. Indra, however, was dissatisfied and he ceased to rain. The Rishis were afraid that even grain would be unobtainable for sacrifice and went and implored Agastya. But he was inexorable and said that if grain could not be had he would perform a mental sacrifice or would obtain wealth from the UttaraKurus or would himself become Indra and diffuse rain and prosperity on the earth ; and he actually produced wealth by his miraculous powers. Indra was pleased and being afraid of his great powers asked his forgiveness and sent copious rain. The Rishis, however, implored Agastya to declare that the slaughter of animals for the purpose of sacrifice was not a slaughter as it was not wise for them to expend and exhaust their *tapa* in going against the wishes of the gods. Agastya consented to this and the Rishis went away satisfied. Here is a veering round in favour of animal sacrifice and the last chapter in the Ashvamedhaparva contains a complete change of front, since in that chapter the Nakula who reviled Yudhishtira's sacrifice is declared to have been Dharma himself who as "Anger" was under a curse by Jamadagni and was to be released from that curse only after reviling the righteous sacrifice of Yudhishtira.

We have quoted the Nakula episode at length as it contains a history as it were of the gradual changes which came over the sentiments of the people in connection with animal sacrifice and animal food (which go hand in hand) through the usual stages of action and reaction. First there was a revulsion of feel-

ing against them; then there was a reaction; lastly came the compromise that slaughter for sacrifice only was not slaughter. Such was the sentiment at the close of the epic period and it has substantially remained so to this day though it must be said that animal sacrifices take place now a days very rarely indeed. The generality of the population have almost entirely given up animal food and animal sacrifice. But the Kshatriyas and a few classes of the Brahmins from among the Indo-Aryans or mixed Aryans still use animal food from inveterate habit.

But even these have given way to the popular sentiment in one point. The sacrifice of cows and bulls is now abhorred as one of the highest sins not only among the rest of the Hindus but also among those Kshatriyas and Brahmins who use animal food and all alike consider the eating of beef also as the highest sin a Hindu can commit.* The history of this prohibition is shrouded in darkness. There is of course not the least doubt that at the beginning of the epic period cows and bulls were freely sacrificed and beef was freely eaten by the Indo-Aryans. The Mahabharata abounds with passages which support this proposition. The great sacrificer Rantideva used to sacrifice so many oxen† that from

* See Arjuna's oath on this point also.

ब्रह्मघ्नानां च ये लोका ये च गोघातिनामपि ।

पायसं वा यवानं वा शकं कृसरमेव वा ।

संयावाप्यमांसानि ये च लोका वृषाभ्रताम् ॥ २८। ७१ । द्रोणः०

† It is stated that one thousand were killed every day in Rantideva's house.

अलमंत तदा गावः सहस्राण्येक विंशतिः ।

the heap of their skins flowed a river which was consequently called Charmanvati or Chambal. As for beef-eating every student of Sanskrit literature knows the remarkable dialogue in Bhavabhuti's Uttara-Ramacharitra wherein two pupils of Vashistha and Vishvamitra jest over the manner in which a young cow was sacrificed in Madhuparka in honour of the guest Vasistha and how before the old bearded Rishi the sacrificed cow disappeared as before a tiger or a wolf. The passage from the Brihadarany Upanishad quoted in the beginning shows clearly that beef was eaten by the ancient Indo-Aryans. But when and how the cow and the bull became sacred and it became a sin equal to Brahmahatya to destroy a bovine animal or to eat its flesh it is difficult to surmise. It is however certain that such was the state of the sentiment of the people at the end of the epic period though curiously enough the Greeks do not mention this restriction. The Greeks no doubt marked the vegetarianism of the people and their aversion to animal slaughter generally. Arrian observes "that the people of India live upon grain and are tillers of the soil, but we must except the hillmen who eat the flesh of beasts of chase." Perhaps then as now the inhabitants of the cold hilly districts in and below the Himalayas were a flesh-eating people while the inhabitants of the plains were vegetarians. We may discover some trace of the prohibition of the slaughter of cows in the expression 'beasts of the

तत्रस्य सुदा कोशन्ति सुश्रमणिकुण्डलाः ।
 सपं भूयिष्ठमश्रीष्वं नाद्य मांसं यथा पुरा ॥ द्रोणः

chase;’ but the prohibition which cannot fail to attract the attention of any foreigner, strange to say, did not sufficiently strike the Greeks and hence has not been particularly mentioned. Certain it is that cow-killing and beef-eating were as heinous offences in the eyes of an Indo-Aryan at the end of the epic period as they are at this date.

We shall however try to trace the history of this prohibition from such glimpses as we get now and then in the Mahabharata. There is first the remarkable story of the seven Rishis and Nahusha the same persons who have figured in the legends noticed in previous chapters. In this legend the Rishis represent the orthodox view as it was held at the beginning of the epic period *viz.*, that it was not against religion to sacrifice cows, while Nahusha represents the reforming school which tried to put a stop to the slaughter of cows. “Do you believe” asked Agastya of Nahusha “in the Vedic mantras which sanction the sacrificing of cows.”* “No” replied he. “No!” said the Rishis

* य इमे ब्रह्मणा प्रोक्ता मंत्रा वै प्रोक्षणे गवाम् ।
पते प्रमाणं भवतः उताहो नेति वासव ॥ १० ॥
नहुषो नेति तानाह तमसा मूढचेतनः ।
॥ ७० ॥ अथर्मे संप्रवृत्तस्त्वं धर्मं न प्रतिबुध्यसे ।
प्रमाणमेतदस्माकं पूर्वं प्रोक्तं महर्षिभिः ॥ ११ ॥ १० । उद्यो०

The commentary on the above shlokas is worth noticing.

“गवां प्रोक्षणे प्रोक्षणोपाकरणमारणादिसंस्कारे ये मंत्राः “देवाश्च यामिर्यजते ददाति च गावः सोमस्य प्रथमस्य मक्ष्यः ।” इत्यादयः यामिः पशुमुनाभिर्गोभिः मक्ष्य इति मक्षणात् याग उच्यते । नहुषस्तु “ब्राह्मणाश्चैव गावश्च कुलमेकं विधाकृतम् । एकत्र मंत्रास्तिष्ठन्ति हविरैकत्र तिष्ठन्तीति” शास्त्रजामाण्याद्ब्राह्मणवद्गवामर्थव्यत्येवं मन्वा नो वेदमप्रमाणीचकार । वेदस्य ब्राह्मणानां चावमानादवोगतिः प्राप्यत इत्याख्यायिका-नात्पर्यम् ॥

"you follow irreligiousness and do not accept the religion which has come down to us from of old." In the disputation which followed Nahusha struck Agastya on the head and he was therefore cursed to fall down on earth as a serpent. Strangely in this episode Agastya supports the sacrificing of cows while in the Nakula episode previously noticed, he is the champion of the sacrificing of inanimate things and is against animal sacrifice. The commentary on the above shloka given below explains how the idea of the sacredness of the cow equal to that of the Brahmin must have arisen. The Brahmin is the repository of the *mantras* of sacrifice and the cow the repository of the things required for sacrifice ordinarily *viz.*, milk, ghee and cowdung and hence Nahusha thought that like Brahmins cows were also inviolable. Another explanation of this sentiment against cow-slaughter is also possible *viz.*, that the worship of Krishna was in a way instrumental in raising the cow to a sacred position ; for the worship of Krishna can not be separated from the cows which he tended. Krishna belonged to a race of Kshatriyas who were cowherds as we shall have to show hereafter and cows became sacred as Krishna-worship grew in India. It is however equally necessary to mention that cows were held sacred even among the Iranians and this idea about the sacredness of the cow might perhaps have come with the Aryans from beyond the Indus. Whatever may be the origin of the sacredness of the cow or of the prohibition of cow-slaughter it is clear from the episode of Nahusha above given that the prohibition came into existence during the epic period

and after the usual oscillations it became the fixed creed of every caste or people in India by the end of that period.

Another explanation may perhaps be found in the general prohibition of the eating of flesh of animals which carry goods on their back or what is called in the Mahabharata पृष्ठमांस. Bulls though not cows came in this category along with horses, camels and other beasts and this prohibition appears to have been based upon feelings of gratitude to these animals. It must, at the same time, be remembered that horse flesh has not become as absolutely prohibited to a Hindu as beef and the origin of this prohibition therefore cannot be attributed to this feeling alone.

This lends us to the enumeration of many other kinds of flesh which became prohibited to a Brahmin or a Kshatriya. The famous shloka* in the Ramayana, "Five five nailed animals only may be eaten by Brahmins and Kshatriyas" is well known. It appears from this that Brahmins had no other special restrictions imposed upon them but the Mahabharata gives some particular rules as to what flesh especially ought to be avoided. In Shantiparva Chapter 36 Yudhisthira asks the pointed question to Bhishma, "What flesh is allowed to be eaten by Brahmins" and the latter replies;† "The bull, earth, little ants, worms generated in dirt and poison

* पञ्च पंचनखा मर्स्या ब्रह्मसन्नेन राघव ।
शल्यकःश्चावित्रो गोवा शशः कूर्मश्च पंचमः ॥

† अनङ्गान्शतिका चैव तथा क्षुद्रपिपीलिकाः ॥
श्लेष्मातकस्तथा विप्रैरमर्ष्यं विषमेव च ॥

should not be eaten by Brahmins. They should not also eat fishes that have no scales and four-footed aquatic animals like frogs and others except the tortoise. Waterfowls called Bhasas, swans, eagles, chakravakas, diving ducks, cranes, crows, Madgus, vultures, hawks, owls, as also four-footed animals that are carnivorous and have sharp and long teeth, and birds and animals having two teeth and those having four teeth ; and food that has been offered to the manes "• It clearly follows that other kinds of flesh were allowed to the Brahmins

Notwithstanding these time-honoured permissions the Aryans and mixed Aryans (with the exception of the conservative Kshatriyas) were gradually settling into total abstinence from flesh-eating by the end of the epic period. Flesh is usually looked upon as a thing which the spiritually inclined ought to avoid ; to quote Manu "To eat flesh and to drink wine are allowable as they are the natural inclinations of the human mind. To abstain from them is however most beneficial."* The controversy

अमक्षया ब्राह्मणैर्मत्स्याःशक्नैर्ये वै विवर्जिताः ।

चतुष्पात्कच्छपादभ्ये मण्डूका जलजाभ्ये ।

मासा हंसाः सुपर्णाश्च चक्रवाकाः पूषा वकाः ।

काका मद्गुश्च गृध्रश्च ययेनोल्कास्तथैव च ॥

क्रव्यादा दंष्ट्रिनः सर्वे चतुष्पात्पक्षिणश्च ये ।

येषां चोभयतो दंताभ्यनुर्दंष्ट्राश्च सर्वशः ॥

What the words मृत्तिका and विष rendered as 'earth and poison' really mean it is difficult to say.

* न मांसमस्त्रणे दोषो न मद्ये न च मैथुने ।

प्रवृत्तिरेषा मृतानां निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला ॥

whether flesh should be eaten or not seems to have much agitated the public feeling about the close of the epic period under the influence of the Ahinsa philosophy and we find in the Mahabharata one or two places where the question is discussed in all its pros and cons. We will quote one of these discussions in extenso. In chapter 115 Anushasana Parva Yudhisthira asks the following question of Bhishma. "You say that Ahinsa or abstention from slaughter is the highest duty. You also say that at Shraddha flesh offerings should be made to the manes of ancestors. How can flesh be got without slaughter? What is the sin of one who eats flesh and what the merit of one who abstains from it? Of one who kills an animal and then eats its flesh and of one who eats flesh which has been bought from or brought by another?" Bhishma answers; "he who desires beauty, long life, intelligence, strength, and memory should avoid slaughter. To abstain from flesh and wine is as meritorious as performing Ashvamedha every month. He who fattens his flesh by the flesh of another, says Narada, comes to grief without fail. One should see what the animal might be feeling from his own feelings, at the time of slaughter. Animals are killed because their flesh is eaten. He who pays money, he who eats flesh brought by another and he who actually kills an animal are all equally guilty of slaughter. But then, for the sake of the world the following rule is laid down by Rishis, though it is not to be followed by those who seek absolution. Whatever is sacrificed to gods and whatever is offered to the manes excepted, all other flesh is prohibited. Vasu king

of the Chedis when asked by the Rishis said that flesh was allowed to be eaten and fell from heaven to this earth and repeating the same opinion went to the lowest depth of the earth. Agastya in compassion for the people declared that all animals of chase were Prokshita or ordained for food. In this way the Shraddhas can be performed with flesh offerings. In the bright half of the Kaumuda month especially, one should abstain from flesh and wine. He who abstains from them for the four months of the rainy season obtains the four things fame, long life, strength and success. Nabhaga, Ambarisha and other famous kings of antiquity did not eat flesh for one month *viz.*, Ashvina or Kaumuda and therefore went to heaven. Those who give up flesh and wine altogether are called *munis*."

The above brings out the trend of popular feeling against the use of animal food and the concessions which it had necessarily to make to old religious superstitions, and the inveterate habits of Kshatriyas. Animal sacrifices were allowed; the rights of hunting were conceded. If any flesh was eaten it was of an animal that had been sacrificed to the gods or killed in chase. Like the Roman Catholics' Lent the Kshatriyas accepted one month's abstention from flesh in deference to the popular feeling against animal slaughter. By and by even Brahmins and Kshatriyas observed strict vegetarian diet, even though they sacrificed animals to gods and offered flesh oblations to the manes or chased beasts of the jungle as of old. The residuum at a sacrifice was merely smelt and thrown into the fire; while it was considered sinful to partake of any flesh that

was offered to the manes or Pitris.* Some Kshatriyas gave up animal food altogether although they still took delight in the healthy sport of hunting.

It was a great moral triumph achieved by the whole nation to abjure wine and liquor along with flesh. The history of this triumph shows that in the beginning, the Indo-Aryans were as much addicted to drinking as their brethren of Germany. In the Mahabharata we find Arjuna and Krishna drinking freely when they are wearied or when they are gay and joyous. The Vrishnis and the Yadavas to which race Krishna belonged were a people of notorious

* The different kinds of flesh that used to be offered to the Pitris are enumerated in the following interesting shlokas of Anushasana Parva chapter 88.

द्वौ मांसौ तु भवेत्तुसिर्मन्स्यैः पितृगणस्य ह ।
 त्रीन्मासानाविकेनाहुश्चतुर्मासं शशेन ह ॥
 भ्राजेन मासान् प्रीयन्ते पश्वेव पितरो नृप ।
 वाराहेण तु षण्मासान् सप्त वै शाकुलेन तु ॥
 मासानष्टौ पार्श्वेन रौरवेण नव प्रभो ॥
 गवयस्य तु मासेन तृप्तिः स्याद्दशमासिकी ।
 मासिनैकादश प्रीतिः पितॄणां माहिषेण तु ॥
 गव्येन दत्ते श्राद्धे तु संवत्सरमिहोच्यते ।
 बाधीणस्य मासेन तृप्तिर्द्वादशावर्षिकी ।
 भान्त्याय भवेद्दत्ते खड्गमासं पितृभ्यो ॥

When flesh became prohibited it was ordained that पञ्चमांस which is also explained by the commentator as the part of flesh left after offerings to the manes should not be eaten. The list includes as we see beef and other kinds of flesh which used to be eaten in the beginning of the epic period. It is natural that none of the Smritis including even the Manusmriti which is nearest to the last edition of the Mahabharata mentions the gradually increasing efficacy of the several kinds of flesh.

drinking habits. Balarama, Krishna's brother, was a great drunkard and the Yadavas ultimately destroyed one another in a drunken brawl. In the Ramayana we find it stated in the Gangakhyana that the Suras were those who took liquor while the Asuras were those who declined it. Sita when she crosses the Ganges vows to propitiate the river with jars of liquor if she returns with her husband safe from her 14 years' exile to the Dandaka forest. In the description of Yudhisthira's Ashvamedha festivities it is said that the sacrificial session was a sea of liquor and intoxicating juice. These and other facts go to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Indo-Aryans especially the Kshatriyas were given to the habit of drinking at the beginning of the epic period.* By the end of that period however the generality of the Indians were teetotalers especially the Brahmins, though the Kshatriyas with their usual conservatism continued the use of liquor. The drinking of liquor was considered to be one of the five greatest sins a man could commit. These

* The following shlokas contain what can be said in defence of flesh eating.

न मांसात्परमं किञ्चिद्भक्षतो विद्यते भुवि ।
 क्षतक्षीणामितसानां ग्राम्यधर्मरतात्मनाम् ॥
 अश्वना कर्षितानां च न मांसाद्विद्यते परम् ।
 सद्यो वर्षयति प्राणान् पृष्टिमग्ना दधाति च ॥
 विधिना वेददृष्टेन तद्रूपेणैव दुष्यति ।
 क्षत्रियाणां तु यो दृष्टो विधिस्तमपि मे शृणु ॥
 वीर्येणोपार्जितं मांसं यथा भुञ्जन् दुष्यति ॥
 आरण्या सर्वं देवत्याः सर्वशः प्रोक्षिता मृगाः ।
 अगस्त्येन पुरा राजन् मृगया येन पूज्यते ॥

sins are referred to even in the Upanishads.* Perhaps the prohibition was observed by the Brahmins from the beginning of the epic period. Be that as it may, it is certain that during the epic period the Brahmins entirely gave up liquor and treated it as one of the most heinous sins which entailed the fall of the sinner from Aryanism. There is a remarkable sentence bearing on this subject in the Shantiparva chapter 141 detailing the Vishvamitra and the Chandala episode in which Vishvamitra pressed by hunger in famine times enters the house of a Chandala and takes away by stealth the leg of a dead dog to eat. A very interesting dialogue ensues between the Chandala and Vishvamitra on the ethics of his conduct and on the question whether a Brahmin could eat the flesh of a dog. The dialogue closes with the final reply of Vishvamitra that there was no great sin in transgressing the rules of eating for the word "fallen" is used only in connection with him who drinks.† Another equally interesting shloka in the Shantiparva Mokshadharma chapter 180 also establishes the same fact. A poor Brahmin who was thrown down by the chariot of a rich infatuated Bania became extremely dejected over his abject condition. While deploring his poor and fallen state Indra in the form of a jackal came to him and comforted him by showing him how great he was as a Brahmin. "You do not dream of liquor nor of the Latvaka bird though nowhere in the world is

* Chhandogya Upanishad mentions them in the 10th Khanda Prapathaka 5.

† वैवातिपापं भक्षमाणस्य इष्टं सुरां तु पीत्वा पततीति शब्दः ॥२०॥१४१॥ रा.

there anything more palatable than these things." A high praise indeed it was that the Brahmins were total abstainers from liquor and that voluntarily for the Kshatriyas still retained their old habits. It is this total abstinence of the Brahmins which was probably one of the many causes which raised them to that high position to which they attained in the Indo-Aryan social fabric and which they keep to some extent even now. Of course, then as now, there were black sheep to be found even in the Brahmin community,* men who were a disgrace to the high moral elevation of their caste in general. For as a class the Brahmins were conspicuous for their temperance and their example was not without effect on the generality of the people. Strabo quoting from Megasthenes observes, "They never drink wine except at sacrifices."†

The Indians thus during the epic period had completely abjured cow-killing and beef-eating while the Brahmins and other Indians with the exception of the Kshatriyas, had mostly foresworne liquor. But in this matter there were some exceptions. The Aryans of the Gangetic valley were, as we have often remarked, the pioneers of religious and social reform but the Aryans of the Punjab were a people noted for their extreme conservatism. Hence it is that we find the people of the Punjab preserving

* मादनीयानि पापानि विदित्वा चात्मनःसुखम् ।

अपिबन्त यथाकामं पानपा गीतवादिनैः ॥

तत्र स्म गाथा गायन्ति क्षीया वृष्टा पठन्ति च ॥ ११ । ६४ । ब्रौण०

This is however said with reference to sacrifices of a prehistoric king who lived before the epic period.

† Perhaps the Soma juice is referred to here, says MacCrimdale.

many ancient customs of marriage and showing themselves not quite amenable to the rigidity of caste. In matters of food and drink they remained equally obdurate and it was for this reason especially that the Aryans of the Gangetic valley looked upon the Aryans of the Punjab as depraved and irreligious. In the heated conversation between Karna and Shalya in the Karnaparva of the Mahabharata which gives us so many interesting remarks on the characters of the different peoples of India we find the following important shloka. "The banyan tree is called Govardhana and the square is called Subhadra and this is the gate of the palace as I remember from my childhood."* The slaughter-house for cows and the drinking tavern were the invariable concomitants of the palace gate. The slaughter of cows and the drinking of liquor were things which the Aryans of the Gangetic valley could not tolerate. The following is another explicit shloka condemning the bad practices of the people of the Punjab in regard to food and drink. "Drinkers of rice or cane juice liquor and eaters of beef, garlic and Apupamansa and fried grain, the people of the Punjab are devoid of good character." Beef and wine were still used by the people of the Punjab including even women who intoxicated, moved about freely by day or night and it is hence that they were looked down upon as outcasts by the

* गोवर्धनो नाम वटः सुमद्रं नाम अश्वम् ।

पतद्राजकुलद्वारमाकुमारात्स्मराम्यहम् ॥ ८ । ४४ । कर्णः

The commentator explains गोवर्धनं गवां छिन्नस्थानम् । सुमद्रं अश्वं कुरामाण्डाश्रयभूतम् पतद्रुमयं राजकुलस्य राजगृहद्वारस्योपलक्षणम् ।

orthodox inhabitants of the Gangetic valley.* Probably the slaughter of cows became as heinous among the people of the Punjab as in the rest of the country by and by and at this date they are at one on this point with the rest of the people of Hindustan.

We cannot omit to mention another people who did not observe the ordinary accepted rules about eating. Fish without scales were prohibited to an orthodox Brahmin of the epic period. The Sarasvata Brahmins however then, as now, ate fish and the Mahabharata explains this unorthodox practice of the Sarasvatas in a legend preserved in the Sarasvati Upakhyana contained in the Shalyaparva. Once upon a time a dire famine having taken hold of India for twelve years, Brahmins went away to different quarters of the globe. Some Brahmins however remained on the banks of the Sarasvati subsisting on fish and preserved the Vedas. When the famine was over the Brahmins returned to Aryavarta and learnt the Vedas again from the Sarasvatas. The Bengal Brahmins and the Shenvi Brahmins still preserve this unorthodox custom of the Sarasvatas.

The usual food of the people of India was then grain, chiefly rice. The rich and specially the

* धानागौड्यासवं पीत्वा गोमांसं लशुनैः सह ।

अपूपमांसवाद्यानामाशिनः शीलवर्जिताः ॥ ११ । ४४ कर्ण०

गव्यस्य वृषा मांसस्य पीत्वा गौडं सुवासवम् ।

पलादुर्गण्डूषयुतात् खादन्ती चैडकात् बहून् ॥ २८ । ४४ । कर्ण०

कनप्रता परवितापहारो मद्यपानं गुह्यदारावर्मदः ।

वाक्पाण्ड्यं गोवधो रात्रिचर्या बहिर्गैह्वं परब्रह्मोपभोगः ॥

येषां धर्मस्तान्प्रतिनास्त्यधर्मो ह्यारदानां पञ्चनदात् विगच्छतु । १९ । ४५ । कर्ण०

Kshatriyas ate rice mixed with flesh or what in modern language is called Pulava. Dhritarashtra says to his son Duryodhana in the Sabhaparva after his return from the imperial sacrifice of Yudhishtira "you eat rice mixed with flesh, how then is it that you grow leaner ?"* The following shloka brings out still more clearly the kind of food that was generally eaten by the Indians of different conditions of life at the close of the epic period. "The rich eat food in which flesh predominates, the middling people food in which milk and its products predominate while the poor eat food mostly composed of oil preparations".†

The following shloka from Vanaparva chapter 190 shows that the Aryans originally inhabited the country along the foot of the Himalayas which produced rice and even now the mountainous region which borders the Indian continent produces rice of excellent flavour. From thence they spread gradually into the hot arid plains of India which were fitted to produce and even now produce wheat and Yava. "When the dark Age will come the people will go to those tracts where Yava and wheat are eaten."‡ We can only explain this shloka on the above supposition for the Aryans in the west certainly prefer wheat growing lands to those which grow rice only. The

* आच्छादयसि प्रावारान्नमासि पिशितौदनम् ।

आजानेया बह्वन्यथाःकेनासि हरिणःकृशः ॥ ९ । ४९ । समा०

† आढ्यानां मांसपरमं मध्यानां गोरसोत्तरम् ॥

तैलौत्तरं दरिद्राणां मोजनं मरतर्षभ ॥ ४९ । ३४ । उद्यो०

‡ ये यवान्ना जनयदा गोधूमान्नास्तथैव च ।

ताव् देशान् संश्रयिष्यन्ति युगान्ते पर्युपस्थिते ॥ ४४।१९० । वन०

richer class it appears used more rice than wheat as we can gather from the word *पिणितौदनं* "flesh rice" used in connection with the food which Duryodhana used to eat.

The Indians' fare was frugal and the Greeks comment unfavourably on the fact that they had no fixed times for meals nor dined in public. The Mahabharata contains some passages which support these remarks. To dine without speaking any thing was considered to be meritorious.* Of course the members of the family must have partaken of food together though not from the same dish. Public dinners as now must have been held only on festive occasions such as the holding of a sacrifice and we have it stated in the Ashvamedhaparva that thousands of Brahmins and Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were feasted by the emperor at the time of his horse sacrifice. The absence of fixed hours for meals was certainly a defect in the social custom of the Indians which subsists down to this day and we find nothing in the Mahabharata or the Ramayana which goes to prove a contrary practice. The fare of the Indians was no doubt frugal but on festive occasions sweet preparations were not wanting. The rich always had sweet preparations in their food and the following shloka is interesting in this connection "Cooks of various sorts viz., those that made vegetable preparations and those that prepared sweet things waited upon king Dhritarashtra as before."†

* प्राङ्मुखो नित्यमग्नीयाह्वाग्यतोन्नमकुत्सयम् । ५६ । १० । अनु०

† आरालिकाः सुपकारा रागलांबिकास्तथा ।

उपातिष्ठत राजानं धृतराष्ट्रं पुरा यथा ॥ १९ ॥ १ । आश्व०

What kinds of sweetmeats these were which used to be provided for Dhritarashtra at Yudhishthira's house as before when his son Duryodhana was in power,* it is impossible now to state. The commentator explains the different words to mean cooks clever in the preparation of vegetables and sweetmeats made of sugar, Jinger and Muga.† Vegetable preparations are spoken of in this line but what kinds of vegetables were in use we have not many hints. Onions and garlic were generally used in the Punjab only, as we have seen already and were looked upon as prohibited in the middle country. Milk of course was used by all while clarified butter or ghee was the best of milk products as may be gathered from the sentence घृतं श्रेयो उदक्षितः "clarified butter is better than curds."

* मैत्रेयमत्स्यमांसानि पानकानि मयूनि च ।

चित्रात् मध्विकाराश्च चकुस्तस्य यथा पुरा ॥ आश्र० १।२१

The old king always wanted wine, fish and flesh and different kinds of sweet drinkables and eatables.

† Apupas (अपूपाः) and Khandavaragas (खांडवरागाः) or Raga-khandavas (रागखांडवः) are the two sweet things which are usually mentioned along with Modakas.

CHAPTER VI.

DRESS AND DECORATION.

Of all the topics concerning the ancients that of costume and ornament excites our greatest curiosity and interest. We can have a tolerably accurate idea of their physical characteristics which in the nature of things cannot differ in different countries to any great extent. But the inventive head of man combined with the requirements of different climates has differentiated our costume so extremely that we can scarcely form an adequate notion of a people's dress without accurate information. The highly civilized ladies of Paris cannot imagine the picture of an aboriginal woman in India with brass bangles high up the elbow, and beads of stone round her neck, with scarcely a scrap of cloth about her loins and a black piece of cloth covering her hair. Nor can the latter have any idea of the former with their flowing gowns and their caps surmounted by an incredible amount of feather and ribbon. To depict the Indo-Aryan men and women of the epic period as they moved about in the public streets of their towns would therefore be extremely interesting. The task at the same time is difficult, as the notices about dress and decorations in the great ancient epics of India are scanty and detached and they are not always clear and explicit.

The dress of the Indo-Aryan male was extremely simple. It consisted very probably of two oblong pieces of cloth one wound round the loins from the waist below and the other negligently or carefully wrapped round the upper part of the body. This is the most primitive dress still used by the people of India. It may perhaps be urged that in entertaining this belief we are led by the natural desire to liken ourselves to our ancestors. But when Draupadi was brought into the assembly of princes and ill-treated, it is stated in the Mahabharata that Duryodhana bared his right thigh in her sight. This could only have been possible with a dhoti worn in a manner not far differing from that now in vogue. This fact also shows that from prince to the peasant all wore the same dhoti about their loins; the only difference was probably in quality and texture of the cloth, the rich wearing dhotis of a fine texture only. Dhritrashtra says to his son when asking him the cause of his emaciation, "You wear Pravara clothes, eat rice mixed with flesh and ride noble born horses. Why then do you look lean and pale?" a shloka which we have already quoted. The word *pravara* in this shloka means probably fine clothes though unfortunately the commentator does not explain it. The second garment worn by males is very rarely mentioned; indeed we are driven to admit that we infer its existence from the mention of an Uttariya in religious books. It was worn about the upper part of the body, sometimes with the right hand out and bare so that the garment or rather the oblong piece of cloth went under the right arm. The right arm was thus left free for action. In the

Manusmriti we are told that the student should always have his hand taken out (नित्यमुदतपाणिः स्यात्) which is explained by commentators to mean 'taken out from the Uttariya or upper garment.' Probably at the time of fighting the ancient Aryans of India had the Uttariya similarly disposed, being secured from sliding by means of a knot on the left shoulder.

Except these two oblong pieces of cloth the Indo-Aryans at least about the beginning of the epic period had nothing about their body. Trousers and jackets were unknown. Bandis and Angarkhas did not exist. We are tempted even to think that the art of cutting the cloth and sewing it into different kinds of clothes was not known in the beginning of the epic period. Tailoring was an art probably of Semitic origin and was introduced into India about the time of the Greek conquest of the Punjab or if at all earlier, at the time of Darius and in consequence of the contact of the Indo-Aryans with the Persians. Strange as it may sound we find that the Mahabharata makes no mention of a tailor, the Sanskrit word for which is *tunnavaṇya*, though the Ramayana which was last recast long after the Greek conquest does mention the word. Negative arguments are no doubt of little value and it may be that the Mahabharata does not contain the word "tailor" because it had no occasion to use it. Be that as it may we may believe that the art of tailoring was unknown in the beginning of the epic period and the Indo-Aryans' male dress consisted of two dhotis one used for covering the lower part of the body and the other for covering the upper.

It naturally follows that the female dress also consisted of two oblong pieces perhaps longer than those of males, uncut and unsewn. The neither garment might have been used in such a way as to cover the upper part of the body up to the shoulders leaving the arms bare as is the fashion among the Gujaratis, the Deccanis, the Bengalis and the Madrasis in these days. The Uttariya or upper garment was usually taken over the head so as to be used like a veil when necessary. In northern India the Uttariya still remains as a necessary part of the female dress. In southern India the lower garment has been so lengthened as to serve the purpose of both and the Uttariya does not exist now, practically speaking, among the southern people of India. The Uttariya was (and is even now in the north) used only when the women went out of doors.

These facts are supported by the description of Draupadi when she was dragged from the inner apartments of Dhritarashtra into the assembly hall, where she had been gambled away. She urged often and often in piteous terms that she was *ekavastra* or wearing one cloth only. That cloth was also attempted to be taken off from her when Duryodhana gave orders for the Pandavas being stripped of their clothes. It seems therefore that the nether cloth was so worn as to be easily pulled away and there was ordinarily no girdle to hold it, nor was it a garment of the form of a gown such as is at present in use in northern India. A gown of that kind could not have been pulled away or taken off forcibly without being torn to pieces. There was also most probably no bodice or Kanchuki as it is

called in modern Sanskrit which specially supported the breasts.

The ancient male and female Greek dress as it is described in Homer curiously enough resembled the dress of the Indo-Aryans. Besides a veil the Homeric women it is believed wore only one garment "an oblong primitive home made woolen cloth, uncut and unsewn, fastened on the shoulders by a pin and round the waist by a girdle; the arms were bare."* The mens' chiton was a robe of eastern origin; their dress differed from that of females in that they had no girdle which distinguished women from men who had also a cloak. We identify the veil as it is translated into English with the Uttariya of the Indo-Aryan women as it not only served to cover the arms and the whole of the upper body but also the head and the face. "The veil was thrown away by the Homeric women in grief or when free action was necessary." Sita is shown to have thrown her Uttariya among the monkeys of Sugriva with the hope that they might thereby give information of her being carried away. In fact Uttariya was a garment which could be dispensed with among both the Indo-Aryan and the Homeric women. The latter like the former do not also appear to have used any support to hold their breasts as no bodice or corset is mentioned by Homer and as pictures of ancient Greek women indicate.

The Deccan custom of women using what is called Kasota in Marathi or *Kaccha* as it is sometimes translated into Sanskrit was probably not in exist-

* Women of Homer by Walter Capt, Ferry.

ence then and the lower garment was worn by women without any *Kaccha*. The *Kaccha* would be inconsistent with the supposition of Draupadi's lower garment being pulled away by force as it would prevent such drawing off. Nor is *Kaccha* mentioned anywhere in the Mahabharata. The modern custom is probably an adaptation of the *Kaupina* prescribed for the thread-ceremony of males. As the marriage of a woman came to be looked upon as her thread-ceremony this *Kaupina* form was prescribed for married females. It is pertinent to remark that custom allows unmarried girls to wear their lower garment without *Kaccha* or *Kaupina* even in the Deccan. It may be added that the *Uttariya* was worn by women of respectable position only. When Draupadi assumed the disguise of Sairandhri at Virata's town she appeared *ekavastra* before Sudeshna the queen of Virata.* Women in monthly course also used no *Uttariya* nor probably did women ordinarily had it on when they worked in the house. Widows again used white *Uttariya* as appears from the fact that when the widows of Dhritarashtra's family visited the old king who had retired to the forest, in company of the wives of the Pandavas, they are differentiated from the others by being described as robed in white *Uttariya*.† This by inference shows that the *Uttariya* worn by ordinary females was coloured in red or black or other variegated tints, the plain white colour being prescribed for widows

* वासश्च परिधायैकं कृष्णा मुमकिनं महत् । विरा० । ९ । २

† शुक्रोत्तरीया नरराजपत्न्यः । आश्व । २५ । १६

only. The red colour which is now supposed to be the proper one for widows was perhaps introduced after the fashion of the Buddhist nuns. The lower garment too must have been, in the case of married females, dyed in different colours and both the lower garment and Uttariya had probably artistic borders as in modern days.

Coming to head dress we find that women had no head dress. They wore the hair uncovered by any cap or piece of cloth. The shloka already quoted describing the white dress of widows begins with the line एतास्तु सीमन्तशिरोरुहा याः. This is the reading given by the commentator Chaturdhara himself but he adds the remark that एतास्त्वसीमन्तशिरोरुहा याः would have been a better reading. The word *simanta* means a peculiar arrangement of the hair so as to leave a line of parting which could be decorated with powder, on the head. This arrangement was used only by women having their husbands alive. The description of widows therefore would naturally begin with the remark that their hair had no line of parting decoration. The same conclusion is supported by the shloka quoted below.* “When there was a general slaughter causing lamentations over the whole earth and destroying the *simanta* of many best women” shows clearly that the chief sign of widowhood was the effacement of *simanta*.

It seems clear that women wore no caps but had†

* संहारे सर्वतो जाते पृथिव्या शोकसमये ।

बह्वीनामुत्तमस्त्रीणां सीमन्तोद्धरणे तथा ॥ श्रुत्य० ११-२०

† Of course in public they would have the Uttariya over their heads.

their hair ordinarily visible. Widows, at least among the Kshatriyas, were not subjected to disfigurement but wore their hair as usual. The tonsure of widows is probably again a practice of Buddhistic origin having been copied from the practice of Buddhist nuns or female religious recluses. It seems probable that women of respectable appearance put their hair in braids or *veni* which fell over their back. We again refer to the shloka which describes the change of appearance which Draupadi effected when she disguised herself as a Sairandhri. She is said to have tied her long hair in a knot on the right side.* Usually therefore her hair fell in braids without a knot on her back down to the hips. Married women with living husbands put on powder decoration in the parting line of their hair as already stated.

With regard to men the respectable portion always had their hair tied in a knot and in public put on a turban. The turban is probably an original dress of the Indians themselves. It consisted then as now of a long piece of cloth which was wound round the head in different forms. When Bhishma goes out for battle he is described as wearing a white turban and so is Drona described. The colour therefore prescribed for advanced men was the white while for young men it was red or some other tint. The peculiar turban of the Indians struck the Greeks, and Arrian in his *Indika* tells us that the Indians "wear an under garment of cotton which reaches below the

* ततः केशान् समुल्लिख्य वेष्टिताग्राननिन्दितान् ।
 कृष्णान् स्रक्पान् मृदून् दीपान् समुल्लिख्य शुचिस्मितान् ॥
 जुगुह्वे दक्षिणे पार्श्वे मृदूनसितलोचना ॥ विरा० । ९ । १

knee half way down to the ankles and also an upper garment which they throw partly over their shoulders and partly twist in folds round their heads.* This is perhaps the way in which poor people covered their heads by combining the upper garment and the turban together. But with respectable people the turban was a separate piece of cloth. Curtius Rufus in his description of India and Indians observes "they cover their persons down to the feet with fine muslin, are shod with sandals and coil round their head cloths of cotton".† Perhaps the form of the turban was not as elaborate and the folding as complex as it is with some castes in India now. It was most probably in the form used by poor people in northern India, and the coiling or the folding could be done by each man himself and at any time. Kings, however, did not put on a turban but always wore a crown. It is strange to remark that when Duryodhana fought his mortal duel with Bhima he had his crown on his head and when he fell down with a broken thigh the crown was still retained on his head and Bhima went and trampled it under his foot. Perhaps the crown was so fixed on the head as to be removable only by unloosening its bond.

The material of which the Indian dress was made was usually cotton. It seems that cotton did not grow in those days out of India not even in Egypt or Turkey; otherwise the Greeks would not have left us that strange observation that the Indian dress is made of wool which grows on trees. But rich people especially women used silken dress. *Pita-*

* Ancient India. Megasthenes and Arrian by MacCrindle page 219.

† Invasion of India by Alexander. MacCrindle page 188.

kausheyavasini is a favourite epithet used in describing royal ladies.* Men also are described as wearing yellow silken cloth. Woolen cloth was also probably used especially in the cold climate of the Punjab, Kashmir and Gandhara. Bharata's grandfather of Kekaya gave him a number of Kambala Ajinas as presents. Kashmir and the Punjab were probably famous, then, as now, for their superior shawls the texture of which was very fine and the warmth of which was very great.† Cotton cloth of course could be made of a texture which was still finer and "clad in extremely fine cloth" is an adjective which is often applied in the epics to princesses and great men.

Besides wool, cotton and silk the epics speak of clothes made of grass. Such clothes were usually worn by anchorites both males and females. When Rama and Sita go to the forest as recluses they put on Valkalas made of Kusha grass and the Pandavas (though not Draupadi) when they are exiled to the forest take Ajina for Uttariya.‡ Dhritarashtra again when he retires to the forest puts on both Valkala and Ajina.§ Rishis and other recluses of the forest

* Subhadra wore a red silken cloth when she was first brought by Arjuna to Indraprastha and was introduced to Draupadi in the dress of a cowherdess.

सुमद्रां त्वरमाणश्च रक्तकौशेयवासिनीम् ।

पार्थः प्रस्थापयामास कृत्वा गोपालिकावधुः ॥ आदि । २२१ । १९.

† सा नूनं बृहती गौरी सूक्ष्मकंबलवासिनी । कर्ण ४४ । १६

‡ ततः पराजिताः पार्था वनवासाय दीक्षिताः ।

अजिनान्यत्तरीयाणि जगद्भुक्ष यथाक्रमम् ॥ समा ७० । १

§ अग्निहोत्रं पुरस्कृत्य वक्त्रलाजिनसंयुतः ।

बभूजनवृत्तो राजा निर्ययौ मवनात्ततः ॥ आश्व । २५ । ३

are also described as wearing Valkala and Ajina. Strangely enough we have no idea nor information as to what grass* used to be utilized for this purpose and how the grass could be woven in form similar to that of the dhotis usually worn by the Indians. In short the epics and hundreds of Sanskrit works written since then, speak of Valkalas or grass garments used by anchorites; but unfortunately they give us very few hints as to the grass used and the manner of its being made into clothes. For that matter we believe that no genuine grass garments of any kind are to be seen anywhere in India in these days. There is however no doubt that clothes made of grass were actually used in India in ancient times. Herodotus assists us at this place and records; "These Indians wear a garment made of rushes which when they have cut the reed from the river and beaten it, they afterwards plait like a mat and wear it like a corset (Ancient India Herodotus, MacCrindle page 2.)

The Indians wore sandals of wood and also of leather. Rama gave to Bharata Padukas of Kusha grass. Arrian says "the Indians wear shoes made of white leather and these are elaborately trimmed while the soles are variegated and made of great thickness." The kind of shoes worn by the Indians resembled in a remarkable degree the shoes worn by the primitive Greeks.

The Brahmins as a rule probably shaved their chin and their head while the Kshatriyas kept the hair

* It is sometimes believed that these Valkalas were made of barks of trees but we have no mention of it in the epics.

on both the parts. Anchorites kept matted hair which were rarely combed or washed. Rama when he started on his life as a recluse had his hair matted with the thick milk of a Banyan tree.* Anchorites also kept beards. It is strange that the epics do not mention in any place any Kshatriya prince or any Rishi as having a beard. Perhaps the epics do not delight in describing the person as minutely as modern poets and novelists do. But Arrian distinctly states that the Indians wore a beard and that they usually coloured it. He remarks "Some dye their beards white to make them look as white as possible but others dye them blue, while some others prefer a red tint, some purple, others a rank green." The tuft of hair which the orthodox Indians leave on the top of their head appears to have been so left even in epic days as we find the Shikha on the head mentioned in some places in the epics. But Rama must have had hair all over his head if he could make his hair matted by simply applying to it the milk of a Banyan tree.†

The Indian Aryans thus of the epic period were extremely simple in the matter of dress and did not differ much from their descendants of modern days as they are dressed at home and in the villages. The court dress of modern India is doubtless of foreign origin being borrowed from the Greeks, the Persians, and

* जटाःकुत्वा नमिष्यामि न्यग्रोवस्त्रीमानय ॥ अयो. १५२ । ६८

† Curtius Rufus observes "They frequently comb but seldom cut the hair of the head. The beard of the chin they never cut at all but they shave off the hair from the rest of the face so that it looks polished."—Invasion of India by Alexander, MacCrindle page 188.

the Mahomedans and latterly from the English. Both the prince and the peasant were in epic days dressed alike, the difference being only in the fineness of texture and the material of the cloth. Difference of position and avocation was certainly marked by difference of dress but it was of a very minor character as can be seen from the descriptions of the disguise which each of the Pandavas and Draupadi adopted when going to Virata's city. We make no apology for quoting these descriptions at length. "There appeared first, before the Virata king, Yudhishthira in the disguise of a Brahmin bearing under his arm golden dice, covered by his upper garment; then came Bhima disguised as a cook carrying in his hand a ladle, a Khaja and a naked knife and clothed in black garments. Thereafter Draupadi wearing one garment only and that too soiled and dirty and her fine curling hair tied in a knot and concealed on the right side appeared in the streets before Sudeshna." Sahadeva in the dress of a cowherd (unfortunately the dress is not here described) came next. Then came Arjuna in the disguise of a eunuch, decked in female ornaments; with long Kundalas in his ears and two wristlets and armlets made of conch-shell covered with gold and with hair falling loose over his shoulders. Lastly came Nakula in the disguise of a breaker of horses; his distinctive dress has also not been described like that of Sahadeva but we may take it he had a whip in his hand. The descriptions clearly show that all wore the same manner of dress and were distinguished very often by the colour of their garments and by the distinctive nature of their ornaments.

The simplicity of the Indian dress was marked by the Greeks, but along with it they also marked the great liking of the Indians for ornaments. Both males and females delighted in wearing ornaments and the richness of India in precious stones and metals and in pearls enabled them, perhaps engendered in them the desire, to wear ornaments in profusion. Besides gold and silver ornaments which were put on by the common people and which were also used for decorating cows, horses and elephants, princes and princesses, rich men and women put on sundry ornaments made of diamonds and pearls. India produced what Milton calls 'barbaric pearls' in abundance and one Greek author actually accuses India of debasing the taste of the whole world by creating in people a desire to purchase that useless commodity for fancy prices. We proceed to describe the ornaments which were usually worn by the Indo-Aryans during the epic period.

Kings wore crowns made of gold and jewels. In what form the crowns were cast we are not in a position to state. They were perhaps conical in shape their tops being decorated with a resplendent jewel. The Indians wore in the ear precious pendants or Kundalas as they are called; these were of course round. About the neck they wore necklaces of pearls or jewels. On the arms they put on the Keyuras or Angadas which perhaps covered the whole length of the arm as is shown by Indian painters while on the wrist they had costly wristlets of gold bedecked with jewels.

Female ornaments were almost the same as male ornaments except that they had no *mukuta* or crown

and had special ornaments for the waist and the ankles. They had the same Kundalas for the ears, the same necklaces perhaps longer which fell over the bosom down to the navel, the same armlets or Keyuras and wristlets. Round the waist they had a Kanchi or girdle which was not as tight as the girdle used by Greek women ; the Indian girdle is sometimes represented as a Sutra, fine and flexible. It perhaps resembled the waist ornament worn by Marwari women of modern days. We also find that female idols of the Buddhist period have a girdle which is not shown as tight but as falling loose in front. The necklace also in these idols is very long and falls invariably over the bosom down to the navel.* About the ankles women wore the Nupuras ; perhaps they were in form such that they covered the whole upper surface of the feet. We may here quote with advantage the famous shloka in the Ramayana in which Lakshmana on being asked to identify Sita's ornaments says " I do not know the Keyuras nor can I recognise the Kundalas. I can identify the Nupuras as I saw them always whenever I fell at her feet. " This clearly shows that women had Keyuras and Kundalas along with men and had besides Nupuras on their feet.

It may be stated here incidentally that the nose ornament usually worn by almost all Indian married women and called by the name of *naiha*

* The Homeric women are also described as wearing long necklaces falling over the bosom, earrings in pierced ears and armlets. They however had nothing for the ankles which on account of the cold of the country were probably never exposed.- Women of Homer by Walter Capt. Perry.

does not appear in the epics. The absence of its mention is however not a very strong proof to take up the position that that ornament did not then exist. In fact the epic poets do not seem to delight in that minute description of person and dress which is the charm and novelty of modern poetry and hence the nose-ring has perhaps no record in the great ancient epics of India. The same may be said of other minor ornaments of modern date such as *thushi*, *bindi* and others.

These descriptions in the epics are supported by the observations of the Greeks. Curtius Rufus, already quoted, observes, "The Indians hang precious stones as pendant from their ears and persons of high social rank and great wealth deck their wrist and upper arm with bracelets of gold. The king lolls in a golden palanquin garnished with pearls which dangle all around it and he is robed in fine muslin embroidered with purple and gold."* Strabo observes "In contrast with the simplicity they observe in other matters they love finery and ornaments. They wear dress worked in gold and adorned with precious stones and also flowered robes made of fine muslin."† Probably the Indian kings at the end of the epic period had borrowed these robes from the Persians.

We shall close this chapter by noticing the kind of seats that were used in epic days. No chairs are mentioned in the epics but the people did not usually squat on bare ground. They generally used *Pithas* or short foot-stools which in the case of the

*Ancient India, Invasion by Alexander, MacCrindle page 188.

† Ancient India (Strabo) by MacCrindle page 57.

rich were ornamented with gold and ivory. Princes and princesses seated themselves on what are called Manchakas or Manchas which may be supposed to be Pithas of large dimensions. They are always described as covered with costly coverings. Probably they were first surmounted with cotton cushions and then covered with silken or cotton sheets of variegated colours. Thus at the time of Draupadi's Svayamvara each king is shown as seated on a separate Mancha or sofa, as we may translate it, of his own, covered over with cushions and costly coverlets. Thus also Krishna when he goes to the Kaurava Sabha for the purpose of mediation is made to sit on a golden Paryanka or sofa covered over with various kinds of coverlets.* This kind of seat is not now in use except perhaps in native states where one comes across the Sarkari Gadi arranged in this fashion in Tehsils where the ruling chief is not personally present.

* तत्र जाम्बूनदमयं पर्यंकं सुपरिष्कृतम् ।

विविधास्तरणास्तीर्णमभ्युपाविशदध्युतः ॥ उद्यो० १०६ । ९

CHAPTER VII-

MANNERS AND MORALS.

We have now a tolerably clear idea of the Indo-Aryans, as they must have been during the epic period. Coming originally of an Aryan race with a tendency to form themselves into castes, they were brought into contact with an aboriginal people of an entirely different mould, appearance, colour and civilization. At first the two races lived apart thus emphasising the distinctions of caste, but subsequently under the second invasion of the Aryans there was a sharp commingling of the two races but again the feeling of caste asserted its strength and the Indian people became a conglomeration of hundreds of castes of different degrees of purity of blood even during the epic period. A similarly great change came over the people in respect of food during the same period. Originally a beef-eating people they gradually came to abjure flesh in general and beef in particular. In this they were influenced by their religious tendencies and perhaps to some extent by their contact with the aborigines of India. So also in point of marriage customs there was a blend of two ideas the Aryan and the non-Aryan. It is therefore not too much to expect that in point of manners and morals the Indo-Aryans were gradually differentiated

from their brethren of the west in consequence of their contact with the aboriginal people of India.

And first we may refer to the custom of keeping concubines which prevailed without any idea of blemish attaching to it. Besides marrying many wives the Indians kept many concubines also as a matter of luxury or as an indication of greatness: When Yudhishtira sent his salutations to Dhritarashtra and other Kaurava relations at Hastinapura after emerging from obscurity, with Sanjaya who had come with a message of peace from them, he did not fail as a dutiful son and brother to express his sentiment of respect and affection for the concubines of his elders and compeers. They are very happily described in the following couplet. "Bedecked with ornaments, wearing costly garments and full of scents, accustomed to happiness and enjoyment and yet not dissolute, ask, Sanjaya, of their welfare the Vesha women whose sight is pleasing and whose conversation is charming."* Probably it was the rich and the princes alone who kept concubines;† the generality of the people lived a chaste and unluxurious life. State etiquette and pageantry also required the presence of courtezans on every auspicious occasion. The Greeks not accustomed to these sights thought the Indian kings extremely sensual as contrasted with the simplicity of the

* अलंकृता वस्त्रवत्यःसुगन्धाः । अवीमत्साः सुखिता भोगवत्यः ।

लघु यासां दर्शने वाक्पथ लब्धी । वेशजिपः कुरालं तात वृच्छे ॥

ठग्यो० । ३० । ३८ ॥

† It may be added that this state of things continued down to within our memory. It is only latterly that the keeping of concubines has come to be looked upon as degrading.

people. "The luxury of the kings or as they call it, their magnificence, is carried to a vicious extent without a parallel in the world. That no form of profligacy may be wanting, he is accompanied by a long train of courtezans carried in golden palanquins and this troop held a separate place in the procession from the queen's retinue."* The presence of courtezans on every occasion was of course not without its influence on the lives of princes and rich people though it must be said that the Greeks in common with all outsiders formed greatly exaggerated notions of that influence. As a matter of fact the influence of the ladies of the family was always very strong and the courtezans usually remained only as an appendage of state.

The Indo-Aryan, however, whether prince or peasant lived a very simple and healthy life. His morning bath and prayer, he never missed. We have a very pleasing description of a prince's doings early in the day in chapter 82 of the Dronaparva a description which would apply to any modern prince of healthy and vigorous habits. "Awakened by the sweet singing of Bhatas and other eulogists of the Kaurava family to the accompaniment of Mridanga, conch and other sounding instruments, Yudhisthira rose in the morning and having performed the necessary duties went to the bath room. One hundred and eight bath servants bathed him with sandal-scented water poured out of golden pots, after having rubbed him with medicinal

* MacCrindle's 'Invasion of India by Alexander' page 189 (Curtius Rufus.)

preparations. He then wound about his head a swan-white turban in order to drain off the wetness of his head. Besmeared with red sandal wood and putting on newly washed clothes and a garland he sat for some time doing his Japa, facing the east and with his hands clasped in adoration. Entering thence the apartment of the sacrificial fire he threw into the fire holy Samidhas (fuel sticks) accompanied and purified by Vedic Mantras. He came thence into the outer apartment where he received old Brahmins learned in the Vedas and gave them each honey, fruit and one golden coin and gave away one hundred decorated horses and cows. He then saw and touched auspicious things such as Akshata plates, golden pots etc, and came out into the second outer court where servants brought for him a golden throne. Seated thereon, the servants placed before him pearl ornaments all white in colour and with these he decked himself. With pearl ornaments on him and with white Chamaras with golden handles waving over him he looked so as to cause pain to his enemies. Thus he sat for a while listening to the singing of musicians and bards when the Pratihari or usherer, a young man with Kundalas in his ears, a sword by his side and his body covered with corslet came in, went on his knees, saluted the king by touching the ground with his head and announced the arrival of Krishna and Anjuna." The passage depicts the inner life of kings and the manner of bowing to them by servants very vividly and we are brought face to face with court life as it must have been at least 2200 years ago if not earlier.

With courtezans surrounding the princes at almost all hours and yet with the influence of the Zenana unabated, with an extreme fondness for luxury and ornaments and yet practising early rising and early bathing, the Indian princes similarly showed the contrast of drinking and gambling habits combined with a high moral calibre. In this they resembled perhaps the ancient German lords. A Kshatriya could not refuse to play with dice if called upon to do so, nor could he refuse perhaps a bowl if offered to him. We have already adverted to these habits in a previous chapter and would simply remark here that addiction to drink and dice was a vice of the Kshatriyas only. In strange combination with it again was their high sense of honour and truthfulness. We have referred to this subject also incidentally in the chapter on caste. The Indian's love of truth was proverbial and even the Greeks were struck with the truthfulness of the Indian people at so late a date as the invasion of India by Alexander.

Allied with this trait of truthfulness of the Indians was their outspokenness. The Mahabharata abounds with instances of outspokenness which would stagger an ordinary courtier in these days. The dialogues in that great epic derive a peculiar charm from the freedom and fearlessness exhibited in the speeches, whoever the speaker may be. It would be outside the scope of this work to give examples and we would only mention the dialogues in the Adiparva on the occasion of the tournament, in the Sabhaparva at the time of the imperial sacrifice and again at the time of gambling, in the Udyogaparva at the time of

Krishna's mediation and the dialogue in the Drona-parva after Drona was killed, which the curious readers might refer to for illustration. Lying and flattery were not characteristic of the Indian people at least during the epic period.

Naturally the Indians were not stolid but their feelings exhibited themselves in their actions. To press the palms of the hands or to gnash the teeth in anger, to wave garments or to strike each other's palms in joy, to weep of sorrow, to swear in revenge, these* and other actions expressive of a man's feelings which in modern India would perhaps be supposed to betoken levity, were the ordinary actions of men high and low. Like strong and free men they were powerful in their likes and dislikes and expressed their approbation or anger fearlessly and without restraint.

They did not take a despondent view of the world but relied on individual exertions far more than their descendants do. The controversy as to whether destiny is superior or man's energy and industry, has often been touched and discussed in the Mahabharata and the superiority of man's efforts is asserted every time. Constant action combined with rectitude is preached in the first line of the concluding shloka of the very first chapter in the Mahabharata and that line "Rely on righteousness while you constantly exert yourself" or such lines as "Ambition is the root of prosperity and gain,"

* तस्मै तस्मै निष्पत्तिस्तु दत्तं दत्तेन्द्रियास्तु कर्तुः ॥

तस्मात् प्रवृत्तिः सर्वे तेभ्योऽप्यस्य तस्मै ददुः ।

सिद्धिनाशाय चक्रुर्वाक्यं वाहुदुःखम् ॥ कर्णः २२ । १२

"An ambitious man enjoys ever-lasting happiness,"* may well serve for a motto in life among any people. In the Anushasanaparva chapter 6 where the question whether effort is superior or luck, is asked of Bhishma who decides in favour of the former, some of his observations are very shrewd. "Even the gods and heavenly bodies have attained to their high position by their actions. Wealth does not go to a man who does not know how to give or to enjoy or to work or to strike or to practise abstinence. The man who relies on luck and does not work becomes unhappy like a woman who gets an impotent husband." In chapter 11 in reply to the question where the goddess of wealth resides, Bhishma answers "foremost of all, in the man who is active and energetic and not given up to anger, whose powers of work are great, and never in the man who is idle."† Possibly this characteristic temperament of the people had undergone a change by the end of the epic period. The extreme heat of the country and the abundance of produce from the land, associated, inconsistent as it may appear, with the poverty of a section of the teeming population of the plains wrought a change in the temperament of the people and we find the following shloka in the Mahabharata typifying the inactive and fate-relying habit of mind in the Yaksha-Prashna

* धर्मे प्रतिमं वसु वः सततोपिष्ठानाम् ॥ अदि०
अनिर्वेदः श्रियो मूलं लाभस्य च शुभस्य च ।
महात् भवत्यनिर्विण्णः सुखमानन्त्यममुते ॥ उद्योग ३९ । ५२

† वसामि नित्यं सुमणे प्रगल्भे दक्षे नरे कर्मणि वर्तमाने ।
अक्रोधने देशपरे कृतज्ञे जितेन्द्रिये नित्यमुदीक्षसत्वे ॥ १ ॥
आकर्मणीलं प्रुक्षे वसामि न नास्तिके सांकरिके कृतज्ञे ॥

episode which we have already shown to be an interpolation of Sauti "He rejoices, Oh Yaksha ! who even though at the interval of five or six days cooks vegetables only at his own house and having no debts undertakes no journey."*

The Indo-Aryans were however at the beginning of the epic period like all young and free peoples energetic and active, truthful and outspoken. They were a free people emphatically and treated none as slaves, neither foreigners nor any of their own people. Greek authors notice this characteristic of the Indian society with admiration. They also notice the frugal and simple life which was lived by the generality of the Indians with perhaps the exception of the kings or the Kshatriyas who indulged in drink and gambling. Theft was almost unknown among the Indians. Megasthenes notes with surprise that "in the camp of Sandracottus consisting of four lakhs of men only a few thefts were reported per day not exceeding two hundred drachmas in value. The people had few laws and respected them. They required no seals nor witnesses to their bonds as the Greeks did. They seldom went to the law courts and whenever they made deposits they confided each other." Testimony like this recorded by contemporary Greek visitors speaks volumes in favour of the uprightness and honesty of the Indian people in general during the epic period. How and when the Indians lost this character it is an interesting question for the historian of India to tackle but one

* पञ्चमेऽनि षष्ठे वा शार्कं पचति स्वे गृहे ।

अनृणी चाप्रवासी च स वारिचर मोदते ॥ वन० । ११३ । १५

which we must leave undiscussed as we are not concerned with it in this book.

Particular peculiarities of particular clans are however noticed in the Mahabharata where Karna quarrels with Shalya and upbraids him for the shortcomings of his people (Karnaparva chapter 45.) "The Panchalas are well known for their study of the Vedas, the Kauraveyas for their religiousness, the Matsyas for their truthfulness, and the Shaurasenas for their sacrifices. But the eastern people are noted for their Shudra habits, the Deccanis for their irreligiousness, the Vahikas or Punjabis for their thievish habits and the Surashtas for their mixture of castes.*

High moral character has been extolled in the Mahabharata above every thing. It is high moral character which makes a Brahmin a Brahmin as has been said at several places. A Brahmin is not a Brahmin if he has not the character of a Brahmin; that is the lesson which the Mahabharata tries to inculcate.†

* ब्राह्म पाञ्चालाः कौरवेयाश्च धर्म्यं सत्यं मत्स्याः शौरसेनाश्च यज्ञम् ।
मत्स्या दासा वृषला दक्षिणात्याः स्तेना वाहीकाः संकरा वै सुराष्ट्राः ॥
कर्ण ४५ । २८

† शूद्रे चैतद्गवेक्ष्य हि जं तच्च न विद्यते ।
न वै शूद्रो मवेच्छूद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः ॥ शां० १८९ । ८

In the Vanaparva, we have the same statement more than once. The following is an interesting statement on the same subject.

शूनु यक्ष कुले तप्त न स्वाध्यायो न च श्रुतम् ॥
कारणं हि द्विमत्वे च वृत्तमेव न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥
वृत्तं यत्नेन संरक्ष्य ब्राह्मणेन विरोधतः ।
अक्षीणवृत्तो न क्षीणो वृत्ततस्तु वृत्तो ह्ययः ॥ ९ ॥
असुर्वेदोपि बुधैः स शूद्रादतिरिच्यते ।
अग्निहोत्रपरो दान्तः स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥ ११ वन० ११३

And how is wealth and prosperity obtained? "By character" is the answer of the Mahabharata inculcated by the episode of Prahrada and Indra told in Shantiparva chapter 124. It is a beautiful episode and is directed to emphasise a great principle. Prahrada saw Shila or character leave his body and immediately saw Shri or Prosperity also leaving him "Who art thou and whither art thou going" he asked. "I am Prosperity and I live where character abides and so do righteousness, truth and strength. You have given away character to Indra and these also have left you and gone to Indra."

As they tried to live a noble life so did the Aryans of India strive to die a noble death. To die at home on a bed was the worst calamity that could befall a Kshatriya. His death-bed was properly either the battlefield or the forest.* So said Duryodhana when in the fight with the Pandavas his cause was getting hopeless and he was counselled submission. The Kshatriyas loved to die fighting while those that could not die so, retired to the forest when old age grew upon them and died in the performance of austerities. Thus did Dhritarashtra die and thus the Pandavas also. The Brahmins equally disdained to die of disease at home and the heroic put an end to their lives by burning themselves on a sacred pyre or by Mahaprasthana or by drowning; others retired to the forest or became Sanyasis. These statements are supported by the instances which Greek writers have recorded of two Indian philosophers who

* अश्वर्मः सुमहानेष यच्छय्यामरणं गृहे ।

अरण्ये वा विमुच्येत संग्रामे वा तनुं नरः ॥ शक्य० ५-३१ ।

burned themselves, when they fell sick, on a pyre of faggots.* Herodotus also records the custom among some Indians that "when any of them falls into any distemper, he goes and lies down in the desert; and no one takes any thought about him whether dead or alive."† Herodotus is speaking here plainly of the philosophers for he adds "They neither kill any thing that has life nor sow any thing but live upon herbs and do not dwell in houses." The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas who died a death like this scarcely cared for burial.

It may perhaps seem strange that the Mahabharata nowhere states that the dead bodies of warriors who fell in battle on each successive day were disposed of or otherwise cared for the same night. On the contrary it appears that these dead bodies were allowed to be eaten away by birds or beasts of prey. Even bodies of kings and great men like Duryodhana, Karna and Drona are not represented as duly disposed of at once either by burial or by burning, and in the scene depicted by Gandhari

* The following particulars are recorded by Strabo about Kalanos' self-destruction, "When he became sick at Pasargadai, this being the first sickness he ever had, he put an end to himself in his 73rd year without heeding the entreaties of the king. A pyre was raised and a golden couch placed upon it. He then laid himself down thereon and having covered himself up was burned to death. Others say that a chamber of wood was constructed and filled with the leaves of trees and that a pyre having been made upon the roof he was shut up in it according to his directions after the procession with which he had been accompanied, that he then flung himself upon the pyre and was consumed like a beam of wood along with it."

† Ancient India by MacCrindle page 2 (Herodotus).

wherein she describes the battlefield after the fight was over, we are told that jackals and vultures dragged the bodies and the bones hither and thither. This incomprehensible state of things is however explained by a remarkable shloka in the Shantiparva chapter 98 wherein it is stated that a brave man who dies fighting is not to be wept for nor is food or water to be given to him, nor should one bathe or be in mourning for him.* This evidently shows that his death was treated in quite a different manner from an ordinary death and the usual ceremonies did not take place with regard to him. It is therefore inconsistent when we are told further on that Yudhishtira and others did pour oblations of water for the dead after the ten days fighting was over, on the banks of the Ganges and also had the dead bodies of those killed in battle burnt. (See the last two chapters of Striparva.) It seems absurd also that the dead bodies of Drona, Karna and Duryodhana of which no care is shown to have been taken could have been identified many days after. It therefore seems probable that these chapters are as we have already hinted in our book on the Mahabharata additions subsequently made by Sauti.

The following peculiarities have been recorded by the Greeks regarding the customs of the Indians in this connection. "The Indians do not rear any monuments to the dead but consider the virtues which men have displayed in life and the songs in

असौम्यो हि हतः ह्यः स्वर्गलोके महीयते ।

न ह्यज्ञं नोदकं तस्य न स्नानं नाप्यसौचिकम् । शां० ९८ । ४५

which their praises are celebrated sufficient to preserve their memory after death." Strabo records that at Taxila or thereabout the custom prevailed of throwing the dead body to be devoured by vultures.* This statement is interesting in two ways. It lends a very great support to our theory that the heroes who died on the battle-field of Kurukshetra were allowed to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey as a matter of honour and a special burial; secondly the customs of some races of the Punjab were so far allied to the customs of the Iranians that we are driven to the conclusion that they still retained their connection with the Iranian Aryans beyond the Indus or that these were later colonies from Iran. The former surmise is more probable and it is for this reason we believe that the Indo-Aryans of the Gangetic valley who had changed their customs looked down upon the conservative Aryans of the Punjab as heterodox. It may be stated that except in the Punjab the custom of burning the dead was prevalent throughout India and was evidently an improvement over the old custom of allowing a dead body to be eaten by vultures.

We shall now proceed to notice some of the minor customs and manners of the Indians. The favourite conveyance among the rich was the elephant. Arrian observes that "the animals used by the common sort for riding are camels, horses and asses while the wealthy use elephants, for this is the animal which carries royalty. The convey-

* Ancient India, Megasthenes ; by MacCrindle page 68.

* Ancient India, Strabo-by Mac Crindle page 69.

ance which ranks next in honour is the chariot and four. The camel ranks third ; while to be drawn by a single horse is considered no distinction at all."* Arjuna, Bhishma and other great warriors are shown to have driven in a chariot and four though such conveyances are not now in use. The single horse *occa* of northern India is undoubtedly the oldest surviving conveyance, being in form and construction like the chariot described in the epics. Asses again are not now used for conveyance ; but there is no doubt that they were used for drawing chariots in epic days. In the *Adiparva* we are told that Purochana was sent in a chariot drawn by asses to Varanavata.† It seems that bullocks were not much used for conveyance. But they were used to draw load waggons for eight eight-bullocked carts are said to have followed Ashvatthama with the munitions of fighting. In the *Mahabharata* we have a very detailed description as to how even kings took care of their herds of cattle. Every king maintained large herds of cattle in suitable forest patches and there were periodical visits by them in person to their places. In *Virataparva* Nakula goes disguised as a cowherd to king Virata and tells him that he was in charge of king Yudhishtira's hundreds and thousands of herds containing each

* Ancient India (Arrian) by MacCrindle page 222.

† स त्वं रासमयुकेन स्पन्देनायुगामिना ।

वरणावतमद्वैव यथा यासि तथा कुरु ॥ आदि० १४१-७

The commentator thinks that *Rasabha* here means mules whose proper name is *अश्वतरी* a word also found in the *Mahabharata*.

one thousand bovine animals, that he knows how to increase the number of cattle and to prevent the appearance of disease among them, that he knows the marks of excellent oxen "by smelling whose urine even a barren woman brings forth a child."* Again in chapter 240 we are told that Duryodhana went to see his herds of cattle in Dvaitavana and pitched his camp near the Ghosha or herdsmen's village. He then saw the bulls and cows by hundreds and thousands and marked them by signs and number and marked the calves also and saw the cows which had just calved. He then particularly marked bulls that were three years old (probably these were specially fit for draft and food purposes). He then held sports, heard the singing and watched the dancing of the cowherds and their women. He then hunted wild animals like *gavayas*, boars and bears whom the cowherds, by beating the jungle, drove in front of the king.†

* कृष्याभ्यापि जानामि राजन् पूजितलक्षणात् ।

येषां मूत्रमुपात्राय अपि वन्ध्या प्रसूयते ॥ विरा० १०-१८

† अथ दुर्योधनो राजा तत्र तत्र वने वसन् ।

जगाम घोषानभितस्तत्र चक्रे निवेशनम् ॥ १ ॥

रमणीये समाज्ञाते सोदके समहीदहे ।

देहे सर्वगुणोपेते चकुरावसपात्रराः ॥ २ ॥

दृष्ट्वा स तदा गावः शतशोथ सहस्रराः ।

अकैलेशैश्च ताः सर्वा लक्षयामास पार्थिवः ॥ ४ ॥

अकयामास वत्साश्च जज्ञे चोपसृतास्त्वपि ।

बालवत्साश्च या गावः कालयामास ता अपि ॥ ५ ॥

अथ स स्मारणं कृत्वा लक्षयित्वा विहायवान् ॥

इतो गोपालकैः प्रीतो व्यवहरत् कुरुनन्दनः ॥ ६ ॥

ततो गोपाः प्रगताः कुशला नृत्यवाद्ने ।

पार्तराष्ट्रमुपातिष्ठन् कन्याश्चैव स्वलङ्कृताः ॥ ८ ॥

This shows that the manner of hunting was nearly the same as it is now. Here we may also quote the description of a king's hunting given by Megasthenes. "Crowds of women surrounded him and outside of this circle spearmen are ranged. The road is marked off with ropes and it is death for a man and a woman alike to pass within the ropes. Men with drums and gongs lead the procession. The king hunts in the enclosures and shoots arrows from a platform. At his side stand two or three armed women. If he hunts in the open grounds he hunts from the back of an elephant."* Hunting was a favourite pastime with the Kshatriyas and even effete kings hunted in enclosures specially made and with special safeguards.

The Indians were fond of singing. The following line† contains a beautiful simile based on the knowledge of the properties of the gamut. "The faultless Panchali said to Bhima in pleasing tones, like a Vina sounding the Gandhara note." The stringed instrument most in use was the Vina which with its four steel strings when properly tuned always raises in the end the Gandhara note. It might seem strange to modern Hindu ears that music was taught to females, viz., singing and even dancing. The daughter of Virata in the company

ततस्ते सहिताः सर्वे तरङ्गन् महिषान् युगान् ।

गवयश्चैव राहाश्च समन्तात् पर्यंकालयन् ॥ १० ॥

सताम्बरीणि विविध गजाश्च सुबहून् वने ।

रमणीयेषु देशेषु ब्राह्मणामास वै युगान् ॥ ११ ॥ वन २४०

* Ancient India (Megasthenes) by MacCrindle page 72.

† श्रीमेव मधुराकाया गान्धारं साधुमुच्छति ।

अन्यमावत पाञ्चली मीमक्षेनमभिहित्वा ॥ विरा० १० । ११

of several fellow students of the same sex was taught singing and dancing by Brihannada. Arjuna disguised as Brihannada said "I shall teach singing and dancing of different kinds and playing on instruments, to the females of Virata's family".* In Virata's palace there was a special hall for girls to learn dancing. This shows a state of society very different from our own. Females were also taught letters and philosophy and Draupadi is often called by the author by the epithets *pandita* or learned and *brahmavadini* or conversant with Brahma. This shows a very far advanced state of female education; the only remarkable thing is that such education was given at home by relatives such as parents or brothers or by teachers specially engaged who were of the Brihannada class.

The question whether the purdah system prevailed among the ancient Indo-Aryans or not may conveniently be noticed here. It seems that the system is very old though it must be added that it was of a different character from the Mahomedan system. The practice of secluding women is undoubtedly of a very ancient date in India. Though there are no references to it in the Greek accounts of India (as probably the Greeks had a similar system among themselves) yet there are certain clear indications of it in both the epics. The following shloka from the Ramayana is most important in this connection † When Rama asked Lakshmana to

* गीतं नृत्यं विचित्रं च वादित्रं विविधं तथा ।

शिक्षयिष्याम्यहं राजन् विराटस्य पुराणियः ॥ विरा० ३-२२९

† व्यसनेषु च कृत्रेषु नो युजे न स्वयंवरे ।

न क्लृप्ता न विवाहे च दर्शनं दुष्यते क्षियः ॥ यु० ११६ । २८

bring Sita on foot in the midst of the assemblage of monkeys and Rakshasas, they were all amazed but Rama said "In calamity, in marriage and at the time of sacrifice a woman's coming into sight is not objectionable." Ordinarily therefore women did not appear in public. At the time of marriage, especially when it was a Svayamvara, the bride appeared in public properly enough; so also at the time of sacrifice. In times of calamity too she is helpless. The Mahomedan purdah does not allow even these exceptions. We find that Draupadi appeared before the assemblage of the princes at the time of the Svayamvara. Again when she was gambled away and had become a slave as it were, she was taken to the gambling hall by Dusshasana. As Sairandhri she walked openly in the streets of Virata's city. In her residence in the forest too it appears she was not veiled as that was perhaps considered to be a time of calamity. So was probably Sita in her cottage at Panchavati unveiled. Otherwise neither could have excited the passions of their abductors (Jayadratha and Ravana). So also when at the end of the general battle Duryodhana's last commander-in-chief Shalya was killed and Duryodhana fled from the battle-field the women of his harem fled to Hastinapura unrestrained by purdah. The poet observes "Women who had not been seen even by the sun in their houses, ordinary men saw returning to the city."* Again when after Duryodhana was killed in the mace fight and the war was over Dhritarashtra, his aged father, with his widowed

* अदृष्टपूर्वा या नार्यो मास्करेणापि वेक्ष्यन्तु ।

ददृशुस्ता महाराज जना याताः पुरे प्रति ॥ उल्ल० २९ । ७४

daughters-in-law came out of Hastinapura and went to the Ganges to pour libations of water, the poet observes "Women who before were not seen even by the gods being now widowed were seen by ordinary mortals. These letting off their hair and throwning away their ornaments, clad in one cloth only, came out of the city like unprotected women."^{*} It seems that the second piece of cloth used by women and called Uttariya usually served to cover the face though it did not conceal the whole body. Perhaps women gradually came to use a third piece of cloth which concealed the whole body and which Kalidasa in his *Shakuntala* calls by the name of *Avagunthana*. We do not remember to have come across that word in the *Mahabharata*. As we have often said, this negative fact is not of much value, but in the *Mahabharata* when *Shakuntala* is brought before the king in his court with her son she does not appear to be concealed by *Avagunthana*; for the poet describes her when repudiated "as in her rage with lips throbbing and eyes blood-red looking at the king askance as if she would consume him.[†] Probably Brahmin girls did not use *purdah* or *Avagunthana* and used the *Uttariya* only to partially conceal their face and their body and so also perhaps the

- * अदृष्टपूर्वा या नार्यो घृता देवगणैरपि ।
 वृषगमनेन हृदयन्ते तास्तदा निहतेषराः ॥ ८ ॥
 प्रकीर्य केशान् सुशुमान् मृषणाप्यवमुच्य च ।
 पक्षवस्त्रपरा नार्यः परिपेक्षुरनापवत् ॥ ९ जी० १०

† सरेमामर्षताम्राक्षी स्फुरमाणौष्ठसम्पुटा ।
 कटाक्षैर्निदहन्तीष तिर्यग्गजानमैक्षण ॥ आदि ७४ । २२

Vaishya and Shudra women; the purdah as such was observed strictly by Kshatriya women at all times except the occasions mentioned in the first quoted shloka.

Such was undoubtedly the case when the epics were last recast i. e. between 300 to 100 B. C. It is possible to suggest that at the beginning of the epic period what was the exception was the rule and that Aryan and non-Aryan women observed no purdah in India. The fact that at present no purdah is observed by the people south of the Vindhya is in some respect favourable to such an idea. Nay it is this fact which first suggested the generally accepted belief that purdah was introduced by the Mahomedans. That belief is as we have shown not based on history. But it may be that purdah may have been introduced into northern India by the Greeks or earlier still by the Persians. Before that date probably purdah did not exist in India and the freedom of women in this respect to the south of the Nerbudda remained unaffected. It is also true that the women in the Mahabharata move and speak freely as if they are unhampered by any purdah. The conversations between Krishna and Draupadi especially and their conduct towards each other shows that at least in the family circle and with friends there was no purdah at all. Moreover the shlokas quoted above from the Mahabharata which go to show that purdah was strictly observed are found in chapters which appear to be, on independent grounds, additions made by Sauti who living about the days of Chandragupta was accustomed to see

the women of the rich people and princes entirely secluded. We may remark *en passant* that while in Kalidasa and down to this day the women never address their husbands by name but adopt some such word as Aryaputra (perhaps translatable as "the son of the father-in-law") or as in modern India mere Aho (oh), in the epics we find Draupadi and Sita, Damayanti and Savitri calling their husbands by their names and in the singular.* It seems clear therefore that the relations of husband and wife and men and women generally were freer and more unrestrained at the beginning of the epic period than towards the end of it.

The Indians were fond of planting gardens especially mango groves which in the sun-parched plains of northern India must always have been a favourite resort of people, both men and women, in the hot season. The following shloka shows how groves were successfully made to bear fruit in a very short time. "The son of Subhadra killed one hundred sons of princes in battle who fell like a garden of five years old mango-trees about to bear fruit cut

* महा० इत्यसे इत्यसे राजन्नेव दृष्टोसि नैषच । वन० । ६३ । ९

वरं दृणे जीवतु सत्यवानयं यथा मृताद्येव अहं पतिं विना ॥

वन० २९० । ५

कतिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ किं शेषे भीमसेन मृतो यथा । विराट० १०-१५

रामा० मनस्यपि तथा राम न चैतद्विद्यते कश्चित् । अर० ९-६

दिष्टया च कुशली रामो धर्मात्मा सत्यसंगरः ॥ सुन्द० ३६-१२

The following Shloka is interesting in this connection as reflecting probably the modern practice.

अश्वत्थशुरयोरेषे वधूः प्रेम्प्यानशासत ।

अन्वशासन्न मर्तारं समाब्धायामिजम्पति ॥ शां० २२९-३०

down.”* There are descriptions of gardens all over the country in both the epics which it would be tedious to refer to here. The Champa garden to the north of the capital of the Angas and the Priyaka tree garden at Ujjain have elsewhere been spoken of. It was also a custom, which has unfortunately fallen into disuse now, for the young girls of a town to go to these gardens for airing and play† in the evening. It was also considered of great merit to plant groves of trees usually mango trees in the vicinity of towns and cities which could be used as pleasure resorts for men and women.

Some peculiar traits of particular peoples may now be noticed. The people of the south such as the Pandya, Kerala and other countries are described as decked with garlands having red teeth wearing clothes dyed in diverse colours and having bodies besmeared with powder.‡ The last mentioned custom seems to have been more general but does not now survive. The Vahikas or the people of the Punjab are derided in both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana (as has elsewhere been noticed) for their habit of drinking water with their hands. It is considered irreligious to drink water from the cavity of one's hands joined together and only poor people do so even in these days.

* चतारामो यथा भ्रमः पञ्चवर्षः फलोपगः ।

राजपुत्ररातं तद्वत्सौमद्रेण निपातितम् ॥ द्रोण० ४५-२०

† नाराजके जनपदे तूद्यानानि समागताः ।

सायान्हे क्रीडितुं याति कुमार्यो द्वेष्टमूषिताः ॥ रा० अयो० ६७-१७

‡ आपीबिनो रक्तदन्ता मत्तमातंगविक्रमाः ।

नानाविरागवसना गन्धचूर्णावचूर्णिताः ॥ कर्ण० १२ । १७

Chapter 228 of the Shantiparva contains an excellent description of the manners and morals of well-conducted and ill-conducted people as they were then conceived to be and we shall close this chapter by giving a free translation of the latter portion of it. "In lapse of time the Danavas became ill-conducted. When wise men told stories of good men in the past, worthless men laughed at them and envied them. Young men ceased to give respect to elders by rising up and saluting them. Free men being reduced to do servants' work were shameless enough to praise themselves for it. Those who became rich by evil deeds became the idols of the people. They bawled loudly at nights. Fire ceased to burn brightly. Sons transgressed the orders of parents; the non-Aryans transgressed those of the Aryans. People ceased to regard mothers, fathers, teachers, old men, guests and preceptors as persons to be revered. Nor did they take care of their children. People began to eat food without giving gifts and oblations and without giving portions to the gods, to the manes and to guests. Cooks did not observe cleanliness in the preparation of food nor, kept it properly covered. They ate minor kinds of grain and the flesh of crows and rats. Milk was kept uncovered and they touched clarified butter without having washed themselves. The housewife did not look to the furniture in the house nor the pots nor the implements of husbandry. They did not repair the breaches in the walls nor did they give water and grain to the cattle that were tied. They ate eatables without giving portions to children or to the

servants. They made milk, sesamum, flesh, Apupa and Shashkuli preparations of food for their own enjoyment and ate flesh of animals which were not sacrificed to the gods. They rose after sunrise and slept before sunset. Non-Aryans hated Aryans and Ashrama people hated those who were without Ashrama. Castes became intermixed and cleanliness was not attended to. No difference was observed between men learned in the Vedas and men ignorant of them. Servants put on garlands and ornaments and fine dress and assumed the ways of walking, standing and seeing of great men. Friends even when called upon did not assist friends and for the sake of an iota of their own profit caused them great loss. They despoiled each other and traded falsely. Shudras practised penance and learnt the Vedas. Men learned in the Vedas ploughed the fields and fools ate feasts at Shraddha. Instead of teachers sending pupils on service and teaching them they themselves asked them questions. The daughter-in-law gave orders to servants in the presence of the father and mother in law and calling upon her husband spoke to him and commanded him. The father tried to keep the mind of the son pleased or lived an unhappy life in the same house. Friends often laughed at others and became enemies though they were themselves formerly assisted by them. Men became ungrateful, unbelieving and sinful and ate food which was prohibited." These sentences bring out vividly before our eyes the idea of a demoralised state of society as conceived by the Aryans about the end of the epic period, and we feel that it is not, except in certain broad points, far different from our own.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL POLITICAL CONDITION.

As some great Railway line starting from a terminus bifurcates at an intermediate station into two sections, one going say towards the north and the other towards the south and as the last extremities of the two sections are eventually separated from each other by hundreds of miles, so do the Indo-Aryan and the Greek civilizations probably starting from some common place bifurcate at a certain point. For while at remote times we recognise points of resemblance between the two, later on they are as divergent from each other as the north is from the south. We are particularly struck by this peculiar character, *viz.*, original similarity and ultimate complete divergence, in the development of the two peoples with regard to their political condition. The same remark doubtless applies to them in the matter of food, dress and manners but in politics and in philosophy as we shall show hereafter, the two races appear very near each other at the dawn of history but are wide apart from each other by the end of the epic period.

If we minutely scan the political condition of India at the beginning of the epic period we shall find that India then consisted, like Greece, of a number of freedom-loving peoples or clans settled in small patches of territory, distinguished by separate names either derived from their chief towns or from

some distinguished king of theirs. One who is acquainted only with modern kingdoms, is sometimes surprised to see how a small country like Greece could consist of so many city-states all independent of one another. In India however with its vast expanse the numerous states were probably of greater extent, yet insignificant when compared with those of modern kingdoms. All these various clans in India as in Greece belonged to the same race worshipped the same deities and spoke dialects of the same language. They were with minor differences also one in manners and religion and had unrestricted marriage relations with one another. But politically they were all independent and almost always at enmity with one another and yet they respected one another's independence scrupulously. Although one clan might defeat another and almost crush it it rarely tried to efface it altogether. This state of things continued in India from before the beginning of the epic period down to very nearly its close. Probably in the beginning small tribes entered the country from the north-west and settled in favourable tracts of the country from the Punjab along the Himalayas down to Kosala and Videha. The tribes of the second invasion, as we have elsewhere shown, did not try to suppress these old peoples but went lower down and occupied tracts of the country along the Jumna and the Chambal, in Malwa and Gujarat. A very large number of peoples or states thus sprang up and are frequently mentioned in the epics. Megasthenes himself enumerated 118 tribes which is not at all strange from the fact that Alexander had

to conquer so many tribes and peoples in the Punjab and Sindh that we at this date almost wonder how there could have been so many different peoples in these two tracts only. Probably the ancient Indo-Aryans like the Greeks had no idea of large kingdoms and their states were sometimes so small as to consist, like those in Greece, of a town and the small extent of territory round it which its people could cultivate. It need not therefore be wondered at, that when Yudhishtira offered peace to his enemies, he pitched his demand so low as to ask for five towns only. They wanted each brother to have one town at least to rule over and that would satisfy their Kshatriya ambition. The same feeling to some extent exists down to this day. The Rajput who has an almost innate desire to rule, is content if he has one village at least where his will is supreme. The following shloka shows clearly that in almost every town there were separate kings at the beginning of the epic period. Yudhishtira who is aspiring to be the emperor of India says, "There are kings in every house who enjoy themselves but they have not attained to the rank of emperor for that title is difficult to obtain." * That there were kings in every town, also shows that the emperor or superior lord of whom we shall speak shortly, did never destroy these small kingdoms entirely but always contented himself with the receipt of tributes or mere presents. It is stated in the Shantiparva that a conquered king should never be displaced altogether.

* युद्धे युद्धे हि राजानः स्वस्य स्वस्य विध्वंकराः ।

न च साम्राज्यमाप्तस्ते सम्राट्शब्दो हि कुर्यात् ॥ समा० । १५ । २

He should be placed on the throne again or if he is killed his minor son or some relative. The various "*digvijayas*" of Yudhishtira and Duryodhana did not result in any extension of their territories. The neighbouring kingdoms were made to feel their power and to acknowledge their suzerainty. It is thus that we find the same clans mentioned in the Brahmanas and the Upanishads through the epic period down to very near its close. The Kashis the Koshalas, the Videhas, the Chedis, the Shaurasenis, the Kurus, the Panchalas, the Matsyas, the Vrishnis, the Bhojas, the Malavas, the Kshudrakas, the Madras, the Kekayas, the Gandharas, the Sindhus, the Sauviras, the Kambojas, the Kushinaras, the Kiratas, the Anartas and many others are names which we meet from the Brahmanas down to the Buddhistic days. The country is usually named after the people or clan and the word when denoting the country is always used in the plural. Kashî is a name derived from the city but more often the name is derived from some renowned king like Kuru or Shurasena.

In these numerous small states or peoples the form of government was usually kingly. As in the beginning of Greek history there were in almost every town tyrants or kings, so in India too there were usually kings in these small states. But the people were, as in Greece, free especially the Brahmins who never subjected themselves completely to the authority of the kings; and the people were consulted on all occasions of importance. We find a very remarkable instance of this in the Ramayana. When Dasharatha proposes to appoint Rama as Yuva-

raja or crown prince, he calls an assembly of Brahmins and Kshatriyas, of merchants and agriculturists and proposes the question to the assembled people and asks their opinion. The description in the Ramayana of the scene is so very vivid that it does not seem imaginary but is based on something that is real. * If there are any doubts on this point they are all cleared when we are told that after Rama's exile and Dasharatha's death, the people were again called in conclave and consulted as to what should be done next. The assembly consisted of the "dvijas," viz., the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas who consulted with the ministers of the state.† In the absence of Bharata and Rama they even suggested the election of another king. The power of the king was thus not absolute but was guided and controlled by the will of the people especially the Aryan people. The kingly power was in its infancy and the people could elect a king if they chose and found it necessary.

The kingly form of government was also not universal though it was the usual form. We find in India as in Greece, oligarchies and even republics. The council of elders in the state did every thing that was done by a king. We do not find direct evidence of this kind of government in the epics; but the Greek writers speak of many republics and the Buddhist accounts of the way in which things

* नानागणरास्तव्यान् पृथग्जानपदानपि ।

समानिनाय मेदिन्या प्रधानान् पुत्रिवीपतिः । १ । ४६

ब्राह्मणा बलमुख्याश्च पौरजानपदैः सह ॥ अयो० । १ । १९

† समेत्य राजकर्तारः समामीपुर्द्वर्जितयः ॥ अयो० । ६७ । २

were managed at Kapilavastu among the Shakyas and the Licchavis clearly show that there were oligarchies or government by the elders among many clans. The Mahabharata speaks very often of Ganas and Ganapatis and we are disposed to identify these with clans with oligarchical or republican governments with their elected kings. What meaning the words गणानुत्सवसंकेतान् which so frequently occur in the Mahabharata carry, we have not been able to determine. We find that in the conquest of the north Arjuna conquered these people.* Probably these seven clans are the same as the *samsaptaka* people spoken of in the Dronaparva. As dwellers in mountains, and of freedom-loving habits, we may identify them with the modern Afridi and other clans of the north-west border. These are from times immemorial noted for their bravery, their predatory habits and their love of independence combined with a republican form of government. The commentator who has no idea as to the republican or oligarchical forms of government does not stop to explain the term. There are again several references as to how a man can rise to the position of the head of a Gana and it seems clear that the Ganapati's was an important position to which people aspired to attain. We are therefore disposed to identify these Ganas with republican clans and the Ganapatis with their elected archons.

It is from this point that the divergence in the political development of the east and the west can be marked. In India the power of kings gradually

* पौरव युधि निजित्य दस्यन् पर्वतवासिनः ।

गणानुत्सवसंकेतानजयत्सप्त पाण्डवः ॥

became absolute and divine and the privileges and rights of the people gradually ceased to exist. In the west the Greeks developed their ideas about government in such a healthy manner that to this day the example of the republic of Athens is the guiding star of all republican institutions of the world. It is difficult to find out the causes of this divergence in development nor is it within the purpose and the scope of this book to explain this phenomenon. Probably the increasing rigour of caste restrictions made the generality of the people neglect or forget their duties and rights as citizens of the state. It became the duty of none but the Kshatriyas to concern themselves with the government of the people. The inclusion again of the predominant Shudra class within the community tended to the same result for the Shudras who formed a large part of the subjects were consigned to labour and would not be allowed the privilege of being consulted on political questions. The growth of population in the plains also probably contributed to increase the power of kings. When the clan was small and homogeneous, it was possible to consult its members and its members could take an intelligent part in the political affairs of the state. But when the community became so extensive as to be unwieldy, kings would naturally gain power in the absence of those contrivances which modern states have invented to secure government by extensive populations. We shall content ourselves with indicating these causes and leave the subject for further elucidation to some other occasion.

The small communities of people in the hilly tracts of the west who were more homogeneous, and mostly of Aryan descent and among whom there was very little substratum of the Shudra or aboriginal population remained independent in spirit and oligarchical in government. The extensive kingdoms in the east of India like the Magadhas on the other hand with their overcrowded population of non-Aryan or mixed descent became more and more despotic. A remarkable confirmation of this view is to be found in that interesting passage from the Aitareya Brahmana which Mr. Dutta has quoted in his "Ancient Indian Civilization." Except in this light we can not possibly understand its true spirit and meaning "The kings in the east attained the title of Samraj or emperor, those in the south were called Bhojas or enjoyers, the people in the west however were without kings, while those in the middle country were called kings only." The people in the east were gradually coming under despotic government; those in the west were still free and self-governed.

The title Samraj which we find actually applied in the Upanishads to Janaka, a king of the Videhas, gradually came to mean king of kings. The monarchs in the east not only became powerful but began to aspire to the title of king of kings. A curious origin of this title of Samraj or emperor is given in a speech of Krishna, when king Yudhishtira of Indraprastha, the city of the Pandavas, aspired to assume that title. The chapter is well-worth quoting as a whole as it gives the political condition of the time which we may take to be a little prior to the

rise of Buddhism or it may be the beginning of the epic period. "The Kshatriyas who survived the massacre by Jamadagnya combined and made this a rule, the Lunar and Solar races and others all agreeing to it. The races born of Ila and Ikshvaku are one hundred in number as you know. In the line of Yayati the Bhojas are numerous all over the four quarters. At present the kings have elected Jarasandha as their emperor as he is the most powerful of all kings. He therefore enjoys the middle land. The valiant king Shishupala has become his commander-in-chief and Vakradanta king of the Karushas, his assistant. Bhagadatta king of the Yavanas of the west, the master of innumerable forces, and one who holds in subjection Muru and Naraka is neutral. In the south-west Kunti-Bhoja Purujit is alone your friend. But Bhishmaka together with Vasudeva king of the Vangas and Paundra-Kiratas is inclined towards Jarasandha. And lastly most of the kings of the north like the Panchala, Shurasena, Matsya and others have fled to the west and south through fear of Jarasandha. We ourselves, numerous and powerful as we are, have left Mathura and have taken refuge in the fort of Kushasthali on the Raivataka hill a fort which is so impregnable that it can be defended even by women. There we live debarred from the middle land for which we sigh."* The middle land was the favourite land of the Aryans of India and from it Jarasandha had expelled Krishna. All other kings however had bowed to him or otherwise acquiesced in his being the emperor. This story

* Chapter 14 of Sabhaparva.

about the origin of appointing an emperor seems somewhat strange. That such an extensive combination was necessary against the Brahmins shows that they were then very powerful. The imperial dignity was however, like the imperial crown of the Germans, an elective one and it did not seek to annihilate minor kingdoms. How and when this state of things changed we have no evidence in the epics to show. But the Buddhist accounts give us an insight into how the kingdom of Magadha began to extend its dominions by the absorption of minor kingdoms and how the Koshalas conquered and annihilated the kingdom of Kashi and were themselves eventually destroyed by the Magadhas. This was after Buddha's death and synchronous with the establishment of the Persian empire. It seems probable that the idea of founding extensive empires began with Cyrus and the method of holding large kingdoms under subjection by turning them into subject provinces ruled over by Satraps or deputy governors removable at the will of the emperor was first introduced by Darius. Probably even the Assyrians and the Egyptians did not attempt it and Darius may well be looked upon as the first real autocratic emperor of the world. It is not at all strange that the influence of the institutions founded by Darius who reduced the portion of India to the west of the Indus to a Persian Satrapy, moulded the growth of empires in India, especially in the eastern parts where kingdoms were already large ; and Magadha was the first kingdom which soon rose upon the ruins of minor kingdoms into an empire with an autocratic emperor at its head. The capital of this

new empire was removed from Rajagriha to Pataliputra and it was here that Megasthenes was the ambassador of the Greeks at the court of Sandracottus or Chandragupta who may be said to be the first real emperor of India. It is pertinent to remark that neither of the epics mentions the city of Pataliputra and the capital of the Magadhas was always Rajagriha which is often mentioned in both. The epics do not describe also empires as they subsequently came to be. The imperial dignity was still unattended by any extension of territory and rested upon the power of the superior state to exact tribute or present from other kingdoms.

But the kingly power had become absolute and the kingly form of government had become universal by this time. Although as stated before there are references to republics and to consultations by the king with the people, preserved from of old, the epics generally represent the will of the king as supreme and his rights to exact obedience divine. Whence was this right derived was a question which the philosophers of India often asked and which they solved in their own way not without some idea as to the duties of kings. In the Shantiparva Rajadharma section, we have in the beginning the very question asked by Yudhishtira to Bhishma; "whence is this word Rajan (king) derived and whence the power of the king to rule over others, mortal as he is having like other men two hands and two eyes only and with no better intelligence?" Bhishma replied "In the Krita age there was no king and all people were free and observed Dharma of their own free accord. After a time however coming under

the influence of anger, greed and desire, they began to transgress Dharma and do all sorts of sinful acts. By the spread of sinfulness the gods suffered and they prayed Brahma to remedy the evil. Brahma thereon composed a vast treatise on Dandaniti or the rules of protecting the people by means of punishment and taught it to Shankara who gave it to Indra who again gave it to Brihaspati who condensed the treatise into 3000 chapters. This work is known as Brihaspatiniti. Shukra again condensed it into 1000 chapters. Prajapati gave the Shastra to Ananga who first ruled the earth in accordance with it. His son Atibala followed him but his son Vena transgressed the rules, oppressed the earth and gave free scope to his love and hate. The Rishis therefore killed him and from his right thigh they created a son called Prithu the son of Vena. The Brahmins and the gods said to him, "Rule the earth according to this law, without love or hate and even-handed towards all beings. Promise also that you will not punish the Brahmins and that you will prevent the intermixture of castes." Prithu promised to do so and ruled the earth righteously. The Brahmins and the gods accordingly gave him their best things. He removed stones from the surface of the earth and made it give forth the seventeen kinds of grass and other plants which are required by men, Yakshas and others. He was called a Rajan (king) because he pleased the people.* Vishnu himself told him that nobody would transgress his orders and by his *tapa* Vishnu himself entered into the body of the

* रजिताम् प्रजाः सर्वास्तेन राजेति यद्व्यते शां० । ५९ । १२५

king.* It is therefore that the world bows to a king as to a god. A king is born with the knowledge of Dandaniti and the spirit of Vishnu." In this way did the thinkers of ancient India try to explain the absolute power of kings. They looked upon it as derived from Vishnu himself subject of course to the king's duty to govern the people righteously according to the rules of Dandaniti which is also supposed to have had a holy origin. The Brahmins tried to keep themselves exempt from the ordinary punishments in the same way as European British subjects are excluded from ordinary jurisdiction in British India and the Smritis and the laws prescribe special rules for the punishment of Brahmins. By and by as a matter of fact the kings exercised absolute power and disregarded their duty of pleasing the people or scrupulously following the rules of Dandaniti though it was also believed to be of divine origin

The power of kings was believed to be, in principle, coupled with the duty of righteous government. The same idea is inculcated in another chapter in another form. There we have the idea of a regular compact made between the subjects and the king, thus anticipating the theory of an original covenant propounded by Hobbes and others by thousands of years. "It is said that formerly people suffered on account of there being no king. They therefore by common consent made the following rule. He who

* स्थापनं चाकरोद्विष्णुः स्वयमेव सनातनः ।

नातिवर्तिष्यते कश्चिद्राजंस्वामिति मारुत ॥

तपसा मगवाव्विष्णुराविवेश च भूमिपम् ॥ शौ० । ५९ । १२८

reviles or strikes another or seduces the wife or seizes the property of another should be expelled. But the rule could not be enforced and the people being harassed went to Prajapati and asked for a ruler whom they would all respect if he would protect them. Brahma directed Manu to rule the people but he declined saying that he was afraid of committing sin, as to rule others, especially men who are sinful, was an extremely difficult task. But the people said to Manu, 'Do not be afraid. Sin will fall on those who commit it. We shall pay you one fiftieth part of our cattle and our gold and one tenth of our corn with one fair girl at every marriage season; the principal men will attend on you with arms. Rule us then strong and happy and we shall give you a fourth part of the religious merit we earn.' Manu accepted the offer and started with them in refuge and strength. He destroyed all enemies and compelled men to follow Dharma. A people therefore should always elect a king for their good." The idea of a covenant between Manu and men, the one promising to enforce Dharma and the other promising to pay taxes in consideration of protection and justice is indeed a noble one but as a matter of fact it has rarely guided the acts of despotic rulers whether in India or outside.

One thing is however certain. However despotic or given up to pleasure a king may be he is usually interested in the maintenance of order and disposed to dispense justice fairly and impartially. A people ruled by a king were therefore always stronger and happier than a state where absolute anarchy prevailed. The evils of anarchy have been depicted in both the

epics very vividly. It is perhaps the dread of anarchy that strengthened the power of kings. In chapter 67 of the Ayodhyakanda where the people come together to consider what should be done in view of Dasharatha's death, the absence of Bharata and the exile of Rama, it is said, "In a state without a king not even the clouds give rain, nor is a handful of grain sown. Sons do not obey their parents nor wives their husbands; one cannot enjoy his property nor the company of his wife. There is no respect for truth. There can be no sacrifices by Brahmins learned in the Vedas what then of festivities and happy social gatherings? Young girls bedecked with ornaments cannot go to play in gardens outside the town in the evening nor can people sleep with open doors or go to jungles in fast-going vehicles. Traders cannot move about nor can people practise at the bow. The philosopher wandering about and taking shelter at any place where he may be in the evening, cannot be seen nor are seen youthful princes anointed in sandal scrapings, resplendent like young trees in the spring. Like a river without water or a jungle without grass or herdsmen without cows is a state without a king. As the sight is essential to the body so is a king necessary to the state for the propagation of truth and religion. Oh! there would be darkness indeed everywhere and nothing would be identifiable if there were no kings dividing right from wrong."* This description of the evils of an anarchy like all descriptions in the Ramayana is powerful and charm-

* अहो तम इवेदं स्यान्न प्रज्ञायेत किंचन ।

राजा चेन्न मयेक्ष्येके विमजन् सायसाधुनी ॥ अयो. । ६० । ३६

ing and it brings out clearly the feeling of fear with which the Indians entertained the idea of a state being without a king to curb the outburst of the evil passions of disorderly men. This fear was so great and the people had so far ceased to take interest in political matters that the people were willing to obey even a powerful foreign master who promised them the benefits of peace and orderly government. We have a description of the evils of a state being without a king given in chapters 67 and 68 of the Shantiparva in the Mahabharata also, a description which though less poetical than that in the Ramayana, is more practical and real. There we are told that, "if a powerful person wishing to conquer a state which has either no king or a weak king approaches, it is wise for the people to welcome him ; for nothing is more heinous than the sins of anarchy. If he is well pleased it will be all well, but if he is enraged he will destroy every thing. A cow that gives milk with difficulty is tormented more and more but one that is easily milked nobody troubles."* Here we see clearly how the people had entirely ceased to look upon themselves as entitled to be consulted on political questions of importance. They looked upon

* अथ चेदमिषन्ते राज्यार्थं बलवत्तरः ।

अराजकाणि राष्ट्राणि हतवीर्याणि वा पुनः ॥ ६ ॥

प्रत्युद्गम्यामिपूज्यः स्यादेतदेव मुमन्त्रितम् ।

न हि पापात्पतेरमस्ति किञ्चिदराजकात् ॥ ७ ॥

सचेत्समनुपश्येत समग्रं कुरालं भवेत् ॥

बलवान् हि प्रकुपितः कुपान्निःशेषतामपि ॥ ८ ॥

भूयांसं लभते क्लेशं या गौर्भवति दुग्धहा ।

अमया मुदुहा राजन्नैव तां विदुदंत्यपि ॥ ९ शां० । ६०

themselves now as mere cows which had to give milk to whoever was strong enough to demand it. The political condition of the Aryans had lamentably fallen by the end of the epic period.

The Indians also came to look upon their king's person as inviolable and his order as the word of God. He who harboured evil intentions about the king was not only bound to suffer in this world but would after death assuredly go to hell. * The well known shloka† is to be found in Shantiparva Mahabharata, "A king should not be slighted under the idea that he is a man. A king is a great deity in the form of a human being." The king was looked upon as "Yama when he punished the irreligious and favoured the religious," and as "Kubera when he took away wealth from some and gave it to others." Nobody was entitled to question the propriety of the king's acts and whoever misappropriated the king's wealth was believed to be destined to fall to the lowest pit of hell, besides suffering punishment in this world. In short the king's divine character impressed the minds of the people so completely that they became almost slavish in their allegiance to him and their attachment to his person became proverbial and continues to be so down to this day.

The king's great privilege was his power of punishment or, as the Mahabharata calls it, his Danda. A deal of mythological haze gathered round this

* दस्तस्य पृष्ठः पापे मनसाप्यनुचितयेत् ।

अधंशयसिह क्लिष्टः प्रेत्यापि नरकं गजेत् ॥ १९ ॥

† न हि जातव्यमन्त्यो मनुष्य इति प्राप्यः ।

महता देवता षोषा नररूपेण तिष्ठति ॥ ४० ॥

Danda and in chapters 121-122 of the Santiparva we have a description of what this Danda is and how it acts, and also about its form and origin. As we have already stated the Danda was created by Prajapati himself for being used without any partiality or hatred, even-handed towards all. It was given by Brahma to the Kshatriyas and *none else*. It was not to be used according to the pleasure of the king but only according to the rules which Brahma himself had laid down. These rules Brihaspati and Shukra have epitomised in 3000 and 1000 chapters respectively for the benefit of the world "in consideration of the short span of human life." It is probable that at the time of the last recast of the Mahabharata both these works were in existence and some works exist even now which bear these names though perhaps they may not be what they were in the days of Sauti. The Rajadharma section of the Shantiparva contains probably an epitome of these books. By thus assigning a divine origin to Dandaniti* or the rules of government the Indians tried to put a check on the absolutely unfettered will of their monarchs and it is very probable that the religious fears of the Kshatriya kings were constantly operating to check their unbridled passions and to make them follow the rules as laid down by Prajapati himself. What these rules were and how just and equitable they are we shall now proceed to show from the Mahabharata itself.

* In chapter 166 Shantiparva a similar story is given about the divine origin of Asi (or sword.) Asi is only another form of Danda and means nothing more than the king's power of punishment.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COURT AND THE PALACE.

The Mahabharata Shantiparva chapter 9 evidently summarizes the contents of the two treatises on Dandaniti or rules of government which were in existence at the time the Bharata was last recast by Sauti. There is extant now a treatise on Niti by Shukra but we are not quite sure if its contents are identical with the contents summarised in the Mahabharata. It would be interesting to give here these contents in detail in order to acquaint the reader with what was believed then to be included in the word Dandaniti, and also to show how far the science of government had developed during the epic period. "The treatise began with the orthodox division of a man's duty into 1 Dharma 2 Artha 3 Kama and 4 Moksha. The first covered religion and morals and was preserved by Dandaniti; the second Artha or wealth was developed in Varta and the 4th *i. e.* Moksha or absolution was treated of in *Anvikshiki*. The treatise then spoke of the six components of a kingdom, of ministers, of espionage, of the king's son; of the different sorts of spies employed and their disguises. It also spoke of the five ways of treating with an enemy *viz.*, Sama, Dana, Bheda and Danda and the fifth

upēksha, of secret consultations and of the four kinds of peace. It treated of the four seasons for the march of armies ; of the different kinds of victories, of the five constituents of a state *viz.*, ministry, territory, forts, army and treasury; of the eight parts of the army ; of the use of different kinds of poisons and destructive powders administered by touch, in food or otherwise; of friends, neutrals and enemies ; of the qualities of the ground and of pathways fit for war, of materials of war, of drill and exercise. It also treated of the different dispositions and evolutions of armies ; of devices in fighting, of omens regarding results, of advantageous fighting or retreat, of weapons and their preservation ; of the ways of raising or depressing the spirits of soldiers, of the manner and times of reverses, of the manner of conveying instructions, of signalling and of movements of engines of war and the methods of their use. It also treated of the ways of distracting the country of the enemy by means of jungly dacoits, incendiaries or poisoners, by the seducing of heads of clans, or by the destruction of crops and trees ; by the spoiling of elephants or their being made terror-stricken ; by creating disaffection among his loyal servants. It treated of the growth, the prosperity and the decline of a kingdom in its seven parts and the prosperity of friends by alliances and deputations. It treated of the dispensation of justice and the destruction of the enemies of peace, of the maintenance of the weak and of the proper distribution of rewards. It spoke of the qualities of a good king, of a good commander-in-chief ; as also of the evil deeds of a king and of the several kinds of his vices. It laid down

rules for a king's manner of life, his dress and ornaments, the 72 ways of improving his body, his observing religious laws, the necessity of his respecting good men, conversing with learned persons, being personally active, practising truthfulness and sweet speech, holding festivities and assemblies, personally and carefully looking into the work of officers, exempting the Brahmins from punishment, inflicting proper punishment on criminals, and striving for the protection of the subjects and the prosperity of the state. The customs and qualities of particular countries, castes and families were also touched. In short Dandaniti described in detail every method by which the people were prevented from abandoning the ways of the Aryans." The above quotation shows how the simple life and duty of a king at the beginning of the epic period had become complex by its end and how the political organisations of the country had advanced in the interval. We shall divide this subject for greater detail to be found not only in the Rajdharma section of the Shantiparva in the Mahabharata but throughout its enormous length, into four parts, 1st the court and the palace, 2nd the revenue and judicial administrations 3rd trade and industry, and 4th foreign relations and the military.

A king had invariably a Rajadhani or capital which again was invariably located by the side of a fort. Forts are said in the Mahabharata to be of six kinds; 1 desert-surrounded fort, 2 hill fort 3 ground fort 4 mud fort 5 men fort and 6 jungle fort. Men fort is only a fort in name and means probably a place surrounded by cantonments or perhaps it is

not a fort at all but an undefended town which depends for its protection solely on the strength of its inhabitants.* Hill forts and ground forts are commonly met with in India and in ancient times almost every king had a fort in his capital where he could securely live. The capital had usually also a wall and a moat around it, the moat being crossed over at the gates by bridges. When Alexander conquered the Punjab, he encountered opposition in almost every small state and had to invest and storm fortified towns. The fort was always stored with arms and provisions against a possible siege and the mahabharata Shantiparva Rajadharma chap. 86 lays strong stress on the necessity of storing grain, arms, and water in the fort. The king had also a Koshagara or treasury and an Ayudhagara or armoury in the fort. The Mahabharata also speaks of engines of destruction as necessary to be held in readiness in forts. This is probably a direction given by Sauti who recast the Bharata after the invasion of the Punjab by Alexander. For the Indians appear not to have known any engines of destruction like catapults previous to this date. The Greek accounts of Alexander's invasion clearly show that he succeeded in storming and taking the Indian forts and cities mainly on account of his engines. The people could not understand these constructions and were often overawed by them. It appears clear therefore that these instruments were subsequently borrowed by them from the Greeks.

The king usually is said to have councillors or mi-

*Thus for instance Nana Sahib Peshwa intended to fortify Poona but Shahu Maharaja asked him to desist and to rely more on his own strength to repel an enemy than on the strength of fortifications.

nisters and the number mentioned in the Mahabharata in one place in this connection is eight. But the meaning is not quite clear here* and the names of these eight ministers are not given in any place. Narada mentions seven *prakritis* in one place in the Sabhaparva chapter 5. We have however clearly a *sachiva* (chief minister), a commander in-chief, a *purohita*, an astrologer and a physician as necessary for a king. And *charas* or spies were officers whom every king had also to employ to report to him the condition of things in his own state and in those of other kings. The king is enjoined to look personally into three things *viz.*, the secret service, the treasury and the administration of justice. He ought not to entrust another with these departments but to personally hear the spies and depute them, personally look into his income and expenditure and the balance he could command every day and himself sit in court to hear parties and settle their disputes. There were several other kinds of officers also and they were usually spoken of as *Mantris* or those who hold counsel with the king. There were besides *Paricchadas* and *Sahayas*, which may well be translated by the words companions and aide-de-camp. They were required to be *Kulina* or wellborn, *Maula* or hereditary and *Svadeshaja* or born in one's own country.

In the chapter of the Sabhaparva noted above, called the Kacchit chapter, seven *prakritis* are mentioned and the commentator gives another shloka in elucidation which gives them as follows; 1 the officer of the fort, 2 the officer of the forces, 3 the Dharmadhyaksha, 4 the leader of the army in bat-

* अष्टानां मन्त्रिणां वक्ष्ये मन्त्रं राजोपपद्येत् ॥ सं०। ८५। ११

tle, 5 the Purohita or family priest 6 the physician and 7 the astrologer and the commentator strangely enough adds the Amatya or minister who is not mentioned in the shloka at all. In another interesting shloka of the nature of a riddle* in the same chapter, 18 officers are mentioned as the complements of a kingly government. Though their names are not mentioned they are evidently known to Sauti. These are 1 the Mantri or minister 2 Purohita or preceptor 3 Yuvaraja or heir apparent 4 Chamu-pati or chief of the army, 5 Dvarapala or keeper of the gate or rather aide-de-camp. 6 Antarveshaka or chief of the inner apartments, 7 chief of the prisons, 8 chief of the treasury, 9 the supervisor of expenditure, 10 Pradeshta (?) 11 chief of the city, 12 supplier of things, 13 Dharmadhyaksha or the president of religious duty, 14 Sabhadhyaksha or chief judicial officer, 15 the keeper of Danda, 16 keeper of the forts, 17 keeper of the boundaries and 18 chief of forests. These are called *tirthas*, (a word with several meanings) and all the *tirthas* of a foreign state and those of one's own state with the exception of the minister, the crown prince and the Purohita were to be watched by three spies each, unknown to one another. This shows that the position of the king was generally so insecure and disaffection so much a matter of usual occurrence that the king had as well to watch his own officers as to try to seduce the officers of another state. Political morality was thus, at least towards the close of the epic period, in a very low state indeed for reasons which will presently appear.

* कश्चिदष्टादशान्येषु स्वपक्षे दश पंच च ।

त्रिमिष्टिमिरविज्ञातैर्वेत्ति तीर्थानि चारकैः ॥ स० । ५ । ३८

Besides the spies the king had for personal attendance the *Pratihari* and the *Shiro-Raksha* or the usher and the body-guard who were both required to be men of great learning, noble born and loyal, of sweet speech, active, careful and truthful. It does not appear from the Mahabharata that there were any female attendants on the king armed and dressed like Yavanis. On the contrary Narada speaks, in the Kacchit chapter, of male bodyguards armed with swords and dressed in red garments as attending the king. * Probably the former custom as depicted in the dramas grew after the conquest of the Panjab by Alexander or it may have been introduced earlier, being copied from the Persians. For even Greek authors like Megasthenes mention armed female attendants who constantly waited upon the king wherever he went. The whole scene depicted by the Greek authors and the dramatists was probably of later date and of foreign origin as the attendant armed women are said expressly by Kalidasa to be dressed like Yavanis.

We now come to the palace which was usually a fortified place with many courtyards or Kakshas as they are called appropriated to the several purposes of the inner apartments, gardens, the sacrificial fire, the king's dressing room &c. The king had always a large harem. There were of course one or two consecrated queens but his other wives were always numerous as we have already stated in many places. The harem was usually filled by young and beautiful damsels whom the people presented as a

* कश्चिद्रक्षावरधराः खड्गहस्ताः स्त्रलंकृताः ।

उपासते स्वामितो रक्षणार्थमरिन्दम ॥ समा० । ५ । ८०

tax on marriage contracts. Whether presented or obtained otherwise, kings in ancient times had many wives for whom a very large part of the palace was naturally set apart. The institution of a large harem was perhaps instrumental in keeping the passions of the king within legitimate bounds. A king with his unbounded means and opportunities for enjoyment can not but be expected to have strong sexual passions and a large harem was in ancient days perhaps necessary and useful. The women of the harem however formed as much a source of pleasure as of danger to the king, who is repeatedly enjoined in the Mahabharata not to trust the women of the harem or to tell them the secrets of the state. Narada in one shloka sums up the duty of a king towards the ladies of his harem. "He is to please them, to guard them carefully, not to trust them nor to confide to them any secret.*" These women, Greek writers have recorded, often killed the king by means of poison or hired assassins. It does not seem that Narada's questions on this point could properly apply to Yudhishthira who had probably one wife only *viz.*, Draupadi and who trusted her and had every reason to trust her implicitly. In fact this shloka alone is sufficient to show that the simplicity and the happiness of a king's family life in the beginning had greatly changed during the epic period and this Kacchit chapter in which the whole Rajadharma is summarised by the skilful Sauti in short and beautiful shlokas in the form of questions is a later addition

* कश्चित्त्रियः सान्त्वयति कश्चित्ताम्रं सुरक्षिताः ।

कश्चिन्न ग्रन्थास्यासां कश्चिद्रुद्रं न माषते ॥ समा० । १ । ८१

and describes the state of things which existed towards the end of the epic period.

Even as it is, this chapter and the chapters on Rajadharma in the Shantiparva contain some very high ideals of a king's duty and give most invaluable instructions to a king who wishes to rule righteously and to earn the affection of his subjects. In fact these directions are of imperishable value, useful in all climes and at all times. A king ought to divide his time equally among Dharma, Artha and Kama. His mornings he should devote to his religious duties, the afternoons to the concerns of the state, and the evenings to pleasure and enjoyment. He should not sleep the whole night but rising early in the morning think over the means of securing the prosperity of the people. He should never consider a matter alone nor with more than one man. His measures should always be swiftly carried out after being well thought of. He should secure the services of even one learned man by the sacrifice of a thousand fools. He should reward his learned men with presents. He should constantly render assistance to his relatives and elders, to old men, to traders and artisans and to his servants who may be in needy circumstances. He should not remove officers who are doing their duty satisfactorily without any misdeed being proved against them. He should avoid the following 14 defects, *viz.* 1 irreligiousness, 2 untruthfulness 3 anger, 4 carelessness, 5 delay, 6 want of contact with learned men, 7 idleness, 8 addiction to sensual pleasures, 9 greed, 10 counselling with ignorant men, 11 non-undertaking of things determined upon,

12 disclosure of secret counsel, 13 non-holding of festivities and 14 activity in many directions. Above all the king should bow to God and be a truthful man. In truth lies the sole foundation of all kingdoms. As Rama observes, a king particularly ought to be truthful for as the king is so are his subjects. A king ought also to be always active and enterprising. "A king not aggrandising and a Brahmin not travelling, the earth eats up as a serpent eats up the rats that lie in holes." He should always be courteous and smiling ; but while he is mild usually he ought to be strict and severe at times. He should collect efficient men about him. He should avoid all vices. He should never be mirthful and never jest with his servants ; a number of evil consequences, very shrewdly observed, follows if a king is given to the habit of jesting. He should always try to please the people and work for their good. "In the same way as a pregnant woman sacrifices her own enjoyments for the sake of the child in the womb so should the king subordinate his happiness to that of his subjects." He should not covet other men's property and should give what is due at the proper time. He should feed those who are weak and incapable or distressed. He should never disrespect brave men and should always converse with old and experienced people. He should not pass his time in idleness. He should on no account give up courage under any circumstances. Well-dressed and of pleasing appearance he should always allow his people to see him freely and explain their grievances to him." Such is the picture of an ideal king painted in the Mahabharata and it is not too

much to say that whatever may have been the faults of kings in India in epic days or in succeeding ages they have never lacked the attributes of being truthful, just and magnanimous and have always loved their subjects as their children. It is this which has made the Indians proverbially loyal, and always loveful of their kings, whoever they may be and however they may behave in the court or in their families.

CHAPTER X.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT (*a*) REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

The civil administration in an Indian state, which was always very limited in extent throughout the epic period, must have been very simple but as states grew in extent and territory towards the end of that period it must have been found necessary to divide a state into minor divisions like the modern district or Suba or Presidency. No such divisions are however mentioned in the Mahabharata and we find the unit of administration is the village. Each village has a headman who is called Gramadhipati and every ten villages have an officer over their Gramadhipatis and so on over every 20, 100 and 1,000 respectively. The lower officer reported the defects in his village or villages to his higher officer and he to his superior and so on. The headman of a village enjoyed for his remuneration, the jungle products of his village and he had to supply them also to the headman of ten villages and he had to supply the officer of 20 villages. The officer who presided over 100 villages was granted the income of one whole village as his stipend. The chief officer of 1,000 villages enjoyed the income of a minor town. A revenue minister superintended the whole collection of corn and gold ; or there might have been separate officers in each big city. These officers watched over the doings of

all their subordinate officers and terrorised over them, as the Mahabharata says, like the evil planet over the Nakshatras. His duty was in short to protect the people from oppression by the officers appointed to protect them. These instructions contained in chapter 87 Shantiparva perhaps appear to be more pedantic than real. But there is no doubt that every village and every set of villages had special officers who protected the people, reported unusual occurrences to higher officers and collected the taxes while specially appointed revenue ministers supervised the whole administration.

The revenue of the state was derived from land and commerce. We have already adverted to the old rule established in the days of Manu *viz.*, that the king should receive one-tenth of the produce of land and one-fiftieth of the gold and the cattle. This was the lowest limit, but the tax gathered was often greater; latterly it was usually one-sixth of the corn produced.* The land was probably not owned by the state which demanded only a fixed proportion of the produce for the protection of the people. The traders also gave one-fiftieth part of their income for the same purpose. But the proportion was often raised to an amount not precisely mentioned as in the case of the land produce. In the chapter above referred to we are told that traders should be taxed after due consideration of the cost price, the expenses undergone, the maintenance

* आददीत बलिं चापि प्रजाम्यः कुरुनन्दन ।

सप्तद्वयमपि प्राज्ञस्तासामेवामिगुप्तये ॥ शृ० । ६९ । २५

of the trader and the sale price*. The proportion taken of the profit left after these deductions was probably fixed at one-fiftieth or more of the sale price. The artisans were also taxed or made to work for the state. The taxes on the artisans varied subject to the same considerations as the above.† The taxes however were to be such as should not press the people. The illustration usually given in this connection in the Mahabharata is that of the milch cow. "The state should be milked by a wise king without starving the calf." The people, it is recommended, should always be explained and impressed that the taxes were taken for the purpose of maintaining order and the combatting of enemies who would otherwise harass the people. Special loans at the time of war might be taken, on condition of being returned, with the consent of the people‡ who should be induced by sweet words to part with their money. Another important source of taxation was the *gomis* as they are called, the maintainers of cattle which conveyed commodities from place to place. The *Charanas* or *Banjaras* with their thousands of cattle seem thus to have been an ancient institution in India. They are recommended to be favourably treated and lightly taxed

* विक्रयं कयमध्वानं मर्कं च सपरिच्छदम् ।
योगक्षेमं च संप्रेक्ष्य वणिजां कारयेत्क्राम् ॥ शांति० । ८७ । १३

† उत्पत्तिं दानवृत्तिं च शिल्पं सम्प्रेक्ष्य चासकृत् ।
शिल्पं प्रतिकरानेवं शिल्पिनः प्रतिकारयेत् ॥ शां० । ८७ । १५

‡ अस्थामापादि घोरायां संघाते दाहणे भये ।
परित्रागाय मन्त्रतः प्रार्थयिष्ये जनानि वः ॥ २९ ॥
प्रतिदास्ये च मवतां सर्वं चाहं भयक्षये ॥ ३० । शा० । ६७

as they extend commerce and agriculture.* It is also recommended that "taxes should be gradually increased, as bulls are gradually brought under control and made to bear increasing burdens; but if placed under control at once they become uncontrollable." Again "leaders of castes may be exempted while the common people are made to pay; these leaders again may be divided amongst themselves and then gradually taxed." Rich men are recommended to be always respected as they form the strength of a kingdom. These principles of taxation were probably disregarded in all really despotic Governments.

Other sources of the king's revenue appear to be mines, salt, Shulka, river-crossings and elephants. The following shloka is important in this connection. "A king should appoint ministers for mines, salt, Shulka, river-crossings and elephant-forces ministers who are his own relatives or men particularly trustworthy."† This shows that these were items of considerable income. The mines were supposed to belong to the king and were worked departmentally. So was salt. Probably there was an important tax on salt indicative of the ownership of the king at the place of its production or salt was manufactured departmentally. Salt-tax appears thus to have been very old in India. What Shulka is it does not clearly appear. The commentator translates it as the place where corn was sold. The Shulka tax was thus the tax which is represented by the modern

* प्रमावयन्ति राष्ट्रं च व्यवहारं कर्षि तथा ॥ शां० । ८७ । ३८

† आकरौ लवणे शुल्के तरे नागवले तथा ।

न्यसेदमात्यानुयाति स्वासात्त्रा पुरुषाद्विज्ञात् ॥ शांति० । ६९ । १९

Sayar tax or customs duty and the word occurs in that sense in many places.* Tolls at the river-crossings also belonged to the king. Lastly elephants belonged to the king and nobody could catch them without permission from him. The last item compels the conclusion that the people were freely allowed to appropriate other beasts of the jungle for purposes of food, trade or hunting. It seems almost certain that the people were allowed free use of the jungles which usually bordered on a state. They were entitled to live therein wherever they liked and to cut what trees they pleased and to graze their cattle wherever convenient. Probably forests abounded in India in those days and were never under the control of any state. The forests were, more probably still, purposely left without control for free enjoyment by the people. For they are expressly enumerated among things which can not be the property of any person.† It is perhaps for this reason that the Pandavas freely roamed in forests and lived on beasts of the jungle without encroaching upon anybody's rights of property. Pasture, forest trees and beasts of the jungle were thus appropriated freely by the people without taxes.

As the tax of the king was levied on the produce of the land, it appears that the land cultivated was never measured. The land of a village was probably divided by the villagers among themselves according

* The word bears the same meaning in the line already quoted.

कन्या शुष्के चारुरूपी विवाहेषुपतेषु च ।

† अटशी पर्वताश्चैव नद्यस्तथीनि यानि च ।

सर्वाण्यस्यामिकान्याहुर्नास्ति तत्र परिग्रहः ॥ अनु० । ६९ । ३४

to their convenience. It is however certain that ownership in particular pieces of land was recognized. It is not one of those things which are declared ownerless. Nay it had a price and we are told in the Anushasanaparva that one should make a gift of land even after purchasing it.* Private ownership in land appears thus to have been recognized all along and if it was sold, it must have been measured. What measures were in use in epic days we can not say. The Bigha now in use is a Mahomedan word and so is the acre an English word. The word that was in use before the time of the Mahomedans was probably Nivartana which is to be found in a sentence of the commentator on a shloka in the Mahabharata. (See commentary on shloka 21 chapter 140 Shantiparva)† The word Nivartana however does not, so far as we remember, occur in any place in the Mahabharata itself.

The last sentence in the extract from the commentary mentioned above is important in another connection. It does not appear that the king had any crown lands during the epic period. Probably the commentator who lived during Mahomedan times spoke from the condition of things in his own days. The king depended of course on the corn given by the people as tax on the cultivated land, for feeding his vast army and his own house-hold. We are not however sure and the absence of any mention of crown lands in the Mahabharata being a negative piece of evidence is not of much value. But the kings had herds of cattle

* तस्मात्कीत्वा महीं दद्यात्स्वल्पमपि विचक्षणः ॥ अनु० । ६० । १४

† यो वै कीनाशः शत निवर्तनानि मूढैः कर्षति तेन विष्टिरूपेण राजकीयमपि निवर्तनद्वयकं कर्षणीयं स्त्रीयवद्रक्षणीयं च ।

of their own which were either formed of the tax on herds paid in kind mentioned in the beginning,* or the increase of their own cattle. These were freely grazed and kept in the extensive forests which abounded everywhere along with those of the people and were in the keeping either of cowherds employed by the state or the cowherds in the state were made to work by turns gratis for the crown. Agriculture, cattle-rearing, and trade so often referred to in the Mahabharata were the principal means of livelihood then† and cattle rearing was not the least important of the three. We have described the herds of cattle kept by king Duryodhana and his interesting visit to his *ghosha* or cattle pens in the jungles in another place.

The same sentence of the commentator also brings before us the subject of forced labour. It is called Vishti, a word which still lives in Marathi in the form of Vetha and conveys the same meaning. The king possessed a right to exact forced labour from artizans and labourers. The officers of the state either taxed them in coin or actually made them work for the state. They probably thus worked free for the king once a fortnight or once in every ten days. They worked to supply the army and the palace with those things which they required and where the state was small they worked in the chief town itself. No caste was exempt from this tax of compulsory labour. Even the Brahmins were

* पशुनामधिपञ्चाशद्विण्यस्य तथैव च ।

धन्यस्य दशमं मार्गं दास्यामः कोशवर्धनम् ॥ शां० । १७ । २३

† कृषिगोरक्ष्यवाणिज्यम्

made to work for the king if they did not follow their own sacred profession and followed the profession of artisans and labourers. The following shloka is important in this connection in more ways than one:— “All Brahmins who have not learnt the Vedas and kept the sacrificial fire should be made to pay taxes and to do forced labour by a king who is religious.”* The Brahmin had certain privileges and exemptions but they were solely in recognition of his learning and sacred avocation. Those who were Brahmins in name only and Shudras by profession enjoyed no such privileges. They were probably not even exempt from ordinary punishment equally with taxes or forced labour or the resumption of heirless property. They were in fact probably treated as if they were not Brahmins at all.

The chief sources of revenue were thus, the land tax which was levied in kind 2 the tax on cattle breeding also taken in kind 3 the Sayer or customs duty levied in gold 4 the income of mines 5 income of salt mines and salt pans 6 toll and 7 elephants of the jungle and curiously enough these items still continue to be the chief sources of Government revenue in India *viz.*, land tax, the salt tax and the Sayer tax together with the minor heads of revenue *viz.*, mines and tolls. It is interesting to note that no Abkari revenue is mentioned nor revenue from opium or from Stamps and jungles are expressly mentioned as ownerless. Opium was probably not largely exported and did not therefore form a special item for heavy

* अश्रोत्रियाः सर्वे एव सर्वे चानाहिताग्रयः ।

तन् सर्वान् धार्मिको राजा बलिं विष्टिं च कारयेत् शा० ७६ ॥ ५

taxation. Nor were liquors made a source of revenue for the people as a whole except the Kshatriyas did not drink them and the liquor tax if imposed would have fallen on the Kshatriyas themselves. The absence of Stamp revenue will be explained later on.

We have so far spoken of the income of a state; we shall now proceed to mention what was considered to be the equivalent return which the people expected for the taxes they paid. It is not possible to say that the duty thus imposed on a king was always nay usually fulfilled. But it was a duty which the Niti Shastra expressly enjoined. We can not but quote here what Narada says in the Sabhaparva about Yudhishthira's duty. Chapter 5 of the Sabhaparva hereinbefore mentioned as the Kacchit chapter is an excellent epitome of what was considered to be a good king's duty towards his subjects. Referring to this part of the subject, Narada asks Yudhishthira. "Is the state not oppressed by you or your women or the princes of your family or by thieves or by avaricious people? Are there tanks large and full located in suitable places in your kingdom, so that agriculture may not depend solely on rain from the heavens? Does not the seed and the maintenance of the man who tills go unrealised? Do you award money lent, with interest at one per cent? Is your Varta or department of livelihood looked to by efficient men? (Varta meant 1 agriculture 2 cattle rearing and 3 manufacture and trade;* money lending is the fourth item added by the commentator). For in Varta lies the happiness of the people. Do your five

* पण्यकरवणिज्यामिः कृष्यागोजविपोषणैः ।

वार्तया धार्यते सर्वे धर्मे रेतैर्द्विजातिभिः ॥ वन० । १५० । ३०

officers of the village brave, well versed and well actioned achieve the good of the country by their united efforts ? For the protection of your cities have you made your villages as strong as the towns and the border land as strong as your villages and all these without a mirror? Do dacoits roam in your country harassing the towns and are they not pursued by your forces in even and uneven places." (verses 79 to 82).

The above summarises very pithily the ways in which in a despotic country the ryots are oppressed or in which they are benefitted by a paternal Government. Some of the suggestions made herein rise to the highest ideals of modern Governments. In every country the first requisite of prosperity is that it should not be oppressed either by the king or his parasites who are usually favourite concubines of the king or some young prince or some relative of the queen.* Neither should it be allowed to be oppressed by highway robbers or rapacious officers. The misery caused by these can scarcely be conceived by people who live under the civilized British Government of India. But past Indian history often illustrates the miserable condition of the poor ryots resulting from all these kinds of oppressions especially when a dynasty of kings is falling to pieces. Persons may still be living who have some impression of the misrule and consequent oppression which prevailed in the days of Bajirao the last. Bajirao himself, his minions, his rapacious officers and the Pindharis all in their turn harassed and plundered the people of India to such an extent that the subsequent change of rule was almost gladly accepted by the

* Like the Shakara in *Mricchakatika*.

people. These primary causes of misrule and oppression Narada asks Yudhishtira, to remove in the first place. The next important item in connection with the prosperity of the Indian ryot is a scheme of efficient irrigation. Failure of rain and consequent famine is a factor which Indian administration has to face from times immemorial and Narada advises Yudhishtira not to leave agriculture solely at the mercy of rain but to assist it by the construction of tanks not empty or scantily filled but full of water, suitably situated in the different parts of the state. Next to irrigation in importance was the question of helping the agricultural classes in India whose indebtedness is not only phenomenal, but as ancient as the epic days. The Bhakta and the Bija or Khada Bija as it is called now, was as indispensable to the cultivator in the days of Chandragupta as it is now and Government had to see that the amount invested did not fail to be realised. But in doing so and in otherwise dealing with the usury of money-lenders, the state had to see that the money-lenders were never awarded interest exceeding one rupee per month per hundred (or 12 per cent). Curiously enough this rule still survives in its entirety in some of the native states and shows the peculiar tenacity of ancient customs in India. Allied with this question was the development of the science of Varta as it is called, concerning agriculture, the rearing of cattle, manufacture and trade which will be dealt with in a separate chapter. Then came the record of the village. The importance of the five village officers working unitedly is impressed upon Yudhishtira's notice. Who these five officers were we are not told. The commentator

states that they were the headman or Prashasta (already noticed), the collector or keeper of the taxes or Samaharta, Samvidhata or the arbitrator between the ryot and the tax gatherer, the Lekhaka or record keeper and the witness or Sakshi. Whence this list is drawn is not mentioned. Certain it is that for every village there were five officers who were all required to be brave men so as to be able to lead the villagers against any attack by dacoits. The country was ordinarily divided between the towns, the villages and the Prant as it is called which comprised the border land skirting on *atavis* or forests. These last were usually inhabited by aboriginal people who constantly committed depredations on the peaceful inhabitants of the state. The suppression of dacoity and the protection of the people were therefore the remaining considerations to which every settled government was asked to pay its attention. The villages were to be as well fortified as towns and the border land was to be made like villages *i. e.*, filled by the location of villages in suitable places and all these *viz.*, towns, villages and the border land were to be made 'without a mirror' which the commentator explains as meaning so clearly visible to the king by means of reports and spies as to require no looking-glass for examination. The pursuit of dacoits even to their fastnesses by the regular forces of the state is also directed as necessary. Here we see a picture of a well-organized revenue administration of a very high order. It belongs probably to the age when the epic period was drawing to its close. Probably Sauti in putting all these questions through Narada's mouth wished to give the rules of

a well-conducted government as they must have been enforced in the days of Chandragupta. Add to this the fact that to feed the blind,* the deaf, the cripple and the recluse as also to feed those who are perfectly destitute was also considered to be the bounden duty of a king. The relief of famished people was clearly looked upon as a sacred duty devolving upon kings as also to adopt measures for protecting the people from fire, serpents, tigers and epidemic diseases.† In fact in almost every matter where modern civilised Governments think it their duty to come to the relief of the people, the people in epic days looked upon it as the duty of Government. Even the respecting of Inams or grants made by previous Governments is inculcated upon Yudhishtira as his sacred duty. We here see not only were Agraharas given in epic days but such gifts were scrupulously respected in all changes of government.‡ The Indian revenue administration thus twenty two hundred years back does not fall short of the best ideals of the civilised British Government of to-day. And there is not much reason to doubt that a nearly similar state of things existed throughout the epic period and the principles of a successful revenue administration were arrived at at a much earlier

* कश्चिदन्धश्च मूकाश्च पङ्कजं न्यगानवावसानम् ।

पितेव पासि चर्मज्ञा तथा प्रत्राजितानपि ॥ ११४ ॥

† कश्चिदग्निमयाज्ञेयं सर्वं व्यालमयात्तथा ।

रोगरक्षोमयाज्ञेयं राष्ट्रं स्वं पारिक्षासि ॥ १२१ । समा० । ५

‡ ब्रह्मदेयाग्रहाराश्च परिबर्हीश्च पार्थिवः ।

पूर्वराजामिषन्नाश्च पाकयन्त्येव पाण्डवः ॥ भा० । १० । ४१

period than that of Chandragupta as can be surmised from the advanced state of the Egyptian government almost in prehistoric times.

The finance was, we must lastly notice a separate department of the state which the king was directed to supervise personally. The king was in fact to look into the income and the expenditure of the state every day. The income was always to exceed the expenditure and the necessity of having a large reserve in the treasury was always insisted upon. The strength of a king always lay in a plentiful treasury for a plentiful treasury could command everything, including an army. Narada gives the relation of expenditure to income as ranging between one half and three fourths according to the prosperous or adverse nature of the times.* A king, it is also stated, should not disregard even a small item of income for even small items go to fill the treasury in course of time. The king should not spend anything from the amount set apart as reserve. He should not spend the reserve even for the sake of Dharma *i. e.*, the performance of religious duty or for Kama *i. e.*, the enjoyment of pleasure.†

The question remains what coin was in use in epic days. The rupee was certainly not in use as it is not mentioned in any ancient work but the silver Karshupana must have been in existence as mentioned

* कश्चिदायस्य चार्द्धेन चतुर्भागेन वा पुनः ।
पादभागैस्त्रिभिर्वापि व्ययः संशुष्यते तत्र ॥ समा० । ५ । ७०

† यद्वि गुप्तावशिष्टं स्यात्तद्वित्तं धर्मकामयोः ।
संचयान्न विसर्गी स्यात् राज्ञा शास्त्रविदात्मवान् ॥ शा० । १० । ३६

in Buddhistic works. The word however does not occur so far as we remember in either the Mahabharata or the Ramayana. The word frequently used is Nishka (निष्का) which was clearly a gold coin. The value of a Nishka appears to have been considerable for in one place it is said that the Brahmins were glad when they were given a Nishka each in gift and cried "you have got a Nishka, you have got a Nishka." Nishka also appears to have been used for making necklaces for women much in the same way as Putlis are now used, and the word निष्ककंदी is often applied to women especially servant girls waiting upon queens or Brahmins,

(b) JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION.

If in the matter of revenue administration Indian civilization during the epic days was not far behind modern systems, if the sources of revenue were nearly the same then as now, if vested rights then, were as carefully looked into as now, in the matter of judicial administration epic India differed vastly from British India. The British Indian system of administering justice is entirely of foreign growth and is quite disconnected with the ancient history of India. We shall not stop to discuss whether Indian character has gained from this imported system of judicial administration. We shall only describe the old system as it existed in epic days and as perhaps it remained in force with slight variations during succeeding periods down to the very establishment of British rule in India. In epic days the states were as stated already usually small in extent and the dispensation of justice was

considered to be the primary personal duty of the king. The king sat in his court, which was principally a judicial court, almost every day for the hearing of causes. He was assisted by a council the composition of which is described as follows in Shantiparva chapter 85. "The council should consist of 4 Brahmins learned, married and of good character, 8 powerful and armed Kshatriyas, 21 rich Vaisyas and 3 Shudras clean and courteous, a Suta or Pauranika endowed with eight qualities and above fifty years of age and the king should consider a case in the midst of his eight ministers. "Thus always surrounded by councillors and advisers" says Bhishma to Yudhisthira, "you should decide cases. Take no secret money for the decision of a case in some one's favour ; otherwise sin will overtake you. The people will flee from you as birds fly from an eagle and the kingdom will go to ruin. The king ought always to give redress to the weak man who is oppressed by a stronger man and who comes crying for justice. If the defendant denies then decide on the strength of witnesses. Where there are no witnesses or no defendants then you shall have to decide with great care. Award punishment commensurate with the crime. Inflict fines on rich men, imprisonment on the poor and stripes on the ill-behaved. He who murders a king should be killed in a terrible fashion ; so also an incendiary, a thief and a defiler of caste. In short there is no sin in inflicting punishment which is just and suited. But a king who awards punishment according to his pleasure becomes ill-famed in this world and goes to hell after death. Remember also that one should

not suffer for the fault of another." Here are given the main features of the judicial administration in epic days in a nutshell. The king assisted by his ministers and by jurors drawn from the people in the four castes presided in the court of justice himself. The number of Vaishyas is the greatest because usually cases of a civil nature came for disposal and their majority ensured the case being decided according to the customs of the trade. The number of cases as a whole must however have been very limited as the people must have been ordinarily afraid to face the king. This is a thing which should be borne in mind by those who are accustomed to see modern India swamped as it is by litigation. Cases were ordinarily settled out of court by mutual consent or the intervention of arbitrators, and only where reconciliation was impossible did the parties go together to the presence of the king ; and their witnesses usually accompanied them. The plaintiff and the defendant, the *Arthi* and the *Pratyarthi* as they were called, stated their cases and witnesses were solemnly sworn if necessary. The local knowledge of the jurors as we may call them enabled the king to arrive at a satisfactory decision, and the king pronounced his judgment accordingly. He is cautioned against the not unnatural temptation to take secret bribes previously for deciding a case in favour of a particular party. Such cases of bribing the king himself may often have arisen and hence the caution. It is stated in the commentary on another shloka that the party which was proved to be false had to pay a fine to the king equivalent to double the amount claimed, if the

plaintiff, and to that amount only, if the defendant. This is an additional reason why few cases must have come before the courts. This amount of fine was in a manner a deterrent substitute for court fees. Where there were no witnesses and such cases must have been many, for in such cases only would the parties ordinarily have recourse to the law, the court had to use its own method of finding out the truth and ordeals were sometimes resorted to. In criminal cases the investigation was of a really simple character. There was however in the old Indian jurisprudence no such distinction as civil and criminal cases. The plaintiff and the defendant were usually before the Court together; perhaps in criminal cases they were so brought by the officers of the state. The nature of the punishment inflicted was nearly the same as now *viz.* fine, imprisonment, *Prahara* (which included both stripes and mutilation) and death. The rich were to be punished by being made to pay heavy fines. That is perhaps an injunction which might seem strange. But we must remember that all heinous offenders whether rich or poor were to be punished with death or mutilation. In ordinary cases therefore the rich were fined and the punishment of fine was as efficacious as imprisonment. It is a rule which survived till lately in some native states of India, where a prisoner was allowed in many cases to pay money in lieu of imprisonment. The greatest divergence from modern practice is to be found in the severity with which theft was punished. Thieves were to be killed as we have seen above or to have their right hands cut off.

We find this punishment from a very interesting legend related in the Mahabharata. A Brahmin Rishi while going to bathe was tempted to steal an ear of corn from a full grown field by which he was passing. He took the ear but immediately repented and going to the king and confessing his crime before him asked him to lop off his hand. "The king" said he, "who punishes the guilty goes to heaven but he who does not punish the guilty goes to hell." The king was compelled to inflict that punishment on the Rishi and by God's favour a golden hand sprang in place of the hand that was lopped off. The punishment of criminals was thus the sacred duty of the king but he was not to imprison or fine or kill anybody for mere pleasure's sake ; a caution which despots often disregarded. The great principle that nobody should be imprisoned without a trial or no property should be seized without justification was also respected in ancient times and the ancient kings probably ruled justly but it can not be said that they always did so. The only thing that prevented the king in ancient times from ruling his subjects harshly was the dread of being deposed or killed and the dread of punishment in the next world.

The system of administering justice as depicted above was suited to the nature of the people and had grown out of their history and as a general rule the people were happy. Crime was less prevalent than now and perjury was almost non-existent. Witnesses as a matter of fact were sworn in a manner which prevented them from deposing falsely and sworn as they were before the king himself

they had an awe of the surroundings which did not fail to impress them. There was no such distinction as examination-in-chief or cross-examination. Most probably there were no pleaders on either side. The king was assisted in every case by jurors drawn from all the four castes who perhaps served the purpose of pleaders and the ends of justice seldom failed. There were no courts of appeal or subordinate courts for the districts and the towns. There was only one court and that of the king himself. The people therefore as a rule preferred to settle their disputes among themselves and the great veracity of the people was also another reason why there were very few disputes. This state of things continued almost throughout the epic period. The Greeks were so far impressed by this state that they thought there were no courts in India at all and no civil disputes. "If a man advanced money to another and did not get it back he blamed himself for trusting the other."

In consequence of the growing extent of kingdoms which since Chandragupta's days became unwieldy, the king could not have remained long the sole judge of the state. We consequently find that the king is being gradually substituted by an Amatya of justice ; we gradually find the jury system fall into abeyance ; we gradually find witnesses learning the vice of perjury. The Smritis hereafter gradually elaborated the system of jurisprudence so much as to make it complex as well as more perfect. The Judge or Pradvivak who was generally a Brahmin dispensed justice according to the Smritis in place of the king, but his name is not to be found in the Mahabharata.

The Mricchakatika shows the manner of court procedure that was prevalent in later days. The presiding officer is being threatened by the prosecutor who is an important personage in the state; there is one Shreshthi only who attends the Court perhaps as juror and there is a writer who takes down the statements of the complainant and witnesses. Probably in epic days all statements were oral. The accused is summoned by the Court, while in epic days as we have stated before plaintiff and defendant came together. The Manusmriti again speaks of professional witnesses who gave false evidence. This was all a later development; but even then India still split up into comparatively small states long continued to be simple and archaic in its judicial administration.

It would perhaps be not uninteresting to quote here a riddle shloka containing a description of Danda or the kingly power of punishment. The commentator explains it in his own way and his explanation is based on later Smritis; but it is certain that some such procedure was in vogue even in the days of Sauti *i. e.*, about the end of the epic period. The Danda is described as "dark in complexion, with four jaws, four arms, eight feet, many eyes, tapering ears, erect hair on the body, entangled matted hair on the head, two tongues, red face and wearing a lion's skin."* The four jaws are explained as the four modes of punishment imprisonment, fine, lopping of the hands and death; the four arms as the four

* नीलोत्पलदलव्यामभ्रतुर्दृष्टुश्चतुर्भुजः ।

अष्टपान्नैकनयनः शंकुकर्णोर्ध्वरोमवान् ॥

जटी द्विजिह्वस्ताम्राक्षो मृगरोजतनुच्छदः ॥ शा० । १२१ । १५

ways of taking money *viz.*, fine, penalty from the plaintiff when proved false being twice the amount claimed, penalty from the defendant when proved false being equal to the amount claimed and confiscation of property. The eight feet are identified with the eight steps in the procedure, *viz.*, 1 the plaintiff's statement, 2 the plaintiff's statement, 3 defendant's denial, 4 demur, 5 or plea for *res judicata* (where the defendant admits the claim, there is no room for Danda) 6 the furnishing of security by the parties for payment of penalty, 7 the evidence and 8 the decision. The many eyes are those of the king, the ministers and the jurors; the tapering ears indicate ceaseless attention and the erect hair on the body the mood of surprise. The entangled braid on the head shows the entangled nature of the consideration, the two tongues are the Plaintiff and the Defendant while the red face and the lion's skin indicate the religious nature of the proceedings. Whether Sauti meant all this we can not vouchsafe but the shloka and the commentary are instructive and show us a picture of the nature of judicial proceedings at the end of the epic period.

CHAPTER XII.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND THE MILITARY

Allied in race and religion, it is curious to find that the several small states into which India was divided were constantly at feud with one another and in this characteristic they do not stand alone. All warlike peoples have been actuated at all times by a desire to fight with and humble one another. In fact Herbert Spencer attributes the rise and growth of political institutions to this very tendency of societies to fight. As in India so in Greece the many city states into which that country was divided constantly fought with one another, though they professed the same religion, spoke the same language, were descended from the same stock and freely intermarried. Probably these constant feuds kept up their martial spirit and prevented their degeneration. Even in Christian Europe at the present day the several states are ready to fly at one another's throat if but a suitable opportunity would offer. The peace is only an armed peace but their constant fear of one another has resulted in one consequence *viz.* the progress of the military science, in other words and in another light, of the art of the scientific destruction of human beings.

Though constantly at feud throughout the epic period there was however, as has already been

care of good men for, adds Narada, "in the proper developement of Varta lay the happiness of the people." We shall try in this chapter to see what progress had been made in these matters in epic days and what help Government rendered, from such incidental references to the subject as are to be found here and there in the epics.

Agriculture was certainly the occupation of the bulk of the population and agriculture had developed and advanced in India to the position at which perhaps it stands to-day. Almost all the kinds of grain then known are to-day the principal products of India with a few exceptions.* The methods of agriculture were again almost exactly the same as now. Irrigation was, we have already seen, specially taken care of by Government and the produce of irrigated lands was then as now more valuable. The sugarcane, indigo or Nili and other various vegetgble dye crops which have now become obsolete were cultivated then with success and probably special attention was paid by experts to this subject.† Horticulture was also successfully practised. Mango planation especially was in favour with the rich and mango-trees were made to bear fruit within five years‡. Though no works on these subjects remain, these statements are justified by such stray references to them as we meet with.

* Even the Upanishads enumerate the principal grains of India as follows *viz.*, rice and barley, sesamum and kidney beans, millet and panic seed, wheat and lentils, pulse and vetches—Brihadarnya Adhyaya 6 Brahmana 3.

† Opium does not belong to India being probably imported into it in later times.

‡ अतारामो यथा ममः पञ्चवर्षः फलोपगः ॥ श्रु०

Next to agriculture and incidental to it was the occupation of cattle-breeding. The science of breeding and tending the bovine cattle was especially studied with great care and we have an interesting description of the art from the mouth of Sahadeva when disguised as Tantipala he seeks employment under Virata as a cowherd. "Under me cows multiply" says he "in number in a short time; nor does any disease appear among them. I know the marks of oxen which are fit to be prized and by smelling whose urine even a barren woman brings forth a child."* Horses and elephants were also carefully studied in ancient times. Nakula disguised as Granthika took service under Virata as a breaker of horses and he sets forth his qualifications as follows. "I know the character of horses and how to break them. I know how to correct their vices and to treat their diseases. A horse under me shall never shy. In my hands no mare is evil what need then to speak of horses?"† There were works on all these subjects in Sanskrit, and the very thorough manner in which the subject was treated will be apparent from the only work which survives *viz.*, a work on the nature and treatment of elephants. Some works however other than those now known are referred to in the question of

* शिषं च गावो बहुला भवन्ति । न तामु रोगो भवतीह कश्चन ॥

ऋषभाधामिजानाणि राजन् पूजितलक्षणान् ।

येषां मूत्रमुपाग्राय आपि दंष्ट्या प्रसृयते ॥ विरा० १० । १४ ।

† अश्वानां प्रकृतिं वेद्मि विनयं चापि सर्वशः ॥

दुष्टानां प्रतिपत्तिं च कृच्छ्रं च विधिकित्सितम् ॥

न कातरं स्यान्मम गावु वाहनं न मेस्ति दुष्टा वदन्ता कुतो हयाः ॥

विरा० १२ । ८ ।

Narada "Do you study the various Sutas, including the elephant-sutra, the horse-sutra, and the Ratha-sutra?" There can be no question that the ox, the horse and the elephant were studied carefully in ancient times and there were professional men as well as treatises in these branches of knowledge.

Coming next to trade which is the third part of Varta we shall speak first of the industries and the manufactures which formed the objects of trade. Naturally enough cotton manufactures then as now occupied the first place in India. Cotton or Karpasa, it is sometimes said, is a word which first occurs in the Manusmriti. But the word occurs in many places in the Mahabharata also the last form of which we have taken to be anterior to the present shape of our Manusmriti. Karpasa is very probably of Sanskrit origin as no word in the Dravidian languages corresponds to its sound. Cotton is no doubt an indigenous product of India which the Indo-Aryans found on the land. But they gave it a name themselves and did not borrow it, as is sometimes erroneously believed, from the Dravidians. Cotton is again known by the word Tula also in Sanskrit and we find that word so early as in the Upnishads.* Moreover cotton clothes are noticed by Herodotus and by Ktesias who records the strange statement that the Indians wear garments made of wool which grows on trees. In fact the art of manufacturing cotton into cloth is very old in India. The spindle and the loom were used in India thousands of years ago and these have only been developed in modern times to enable the application of steam

*यद्येषीकानूलमग्री श्रोतं प्रदूयेत एवमस्य सर्वे पाप्मानः प्रदूयन्ते

power to their working. The principle remains the same and whoever were the Hargraves and the Cartrights of the ancient world they were undoubtedly the benefactors of mankind. The weaver was a well-recognised member of the Indian society from historic days and the *pata* and the *tantu* have furnished illustrations to philosophers from unknown times. In the epic period the art had so vastly developed that the finest cloth was manufactured in India as is proved by the testimony of Greek and other foreign writers and was exported from here to Persia, Turkey and Europe. In the list of presents brought to Yudhishtira on the occasion of his imperial sacrifice we find that Bharukaccha men are mentioned as bringing slave girls clad in cotton clothes.* Probably Broach was famous then for its cotton as it is now. Equally famous was the Pandya and Chola country, as it is now, for the production of fine cotton cloth.† Rich and princely persons both male and female are again usually described in the epics as wearing fine cotton cloth. Like cotton both silk and wool were woven into cloth and fine silken and woollen cloth “unmixed with cotton” is mentioned as having been brought as a present by northern kings.‡ The word

* शतं दासीसहस्राणां कार्पासिकनिवासिनाम् ।

बाली च कृत्स्नमादाय मरुकच्छनिवासिनः ॥ समा० ५१ । १० ।

† मणिरत्नानि मास्वन्ति कांचनं सूक्ष्मवल्कलम् ।

चोलपाण्ड्यावपि द्वारं न लेमते द्रुपस्थितौ ॥ समा० ५२ । १५ ।

‡ प्रमाणरागस्पर्शाब्धौ बाल्मीचीनसमुद्भवम् ।

ओर्णं च रांकवं चैव कीटजं पट्टजं तथा ॥

कुटीकृतं तथैवात्र कमलामिं सहस्रशः ।

सदृशवल्कलकार्पासमायिकं यदु चाजिनम् ॥ समा० ५१ । २ ।

'unmixed with cotton' is remarkable and clearly shows that cloth made of silk or wool mixed with cotton was not unknown. The silk is said to be born of China ; in fact China appears to be the mother of silk as India is of cotton. Woollen manufactures also were as far advanced as they are found at this day. Kashmir and the country in its vicinity especially was then as now famous for its shawls simple as well as embroidered. The king of Kamboja is said to have presented to Yudhishtira superior cloths made from the hair of sheep, of Bila (animals living in holes as the commentator explains) and of cats, ornamented with gold (lace) * The art of interlacing was well known in the epic days and gold-latticed silken, cotton and woollen cloth used to be exported from India by the land and sea routes in very ancient times. Woollen cloth of a fine texture, softness and colour was often used by women for clothing, the word Kambala being used in this connection in a manner that strikes us somewhat strangely. सुदृढकवचवासिनी is as much a favourite epithet of rich women in the Mahabharata as पीतकौशेयवासिनी.

Such was the condition of the manufacture of cloth which could not have been reached without the assistance and the protection of the state. The artisan class appears to have been specially helped by Government. An important shloka is to be found in this connection also in that peculiarly interesting and instructive Kacchit Chapter in the Sabhaparva so often referred to in this book. Narada asks

* लोणांश्च वैलाश्च कर्षदन्ताश्च जातरूपपरिष्कृताम् ।

प्राशरालिनमुक्योऽथ काम्बोजःप्रददौ बहून् ॥ श० ५१ । २

Yudhishtira whether he gives materials and instruments and maintenance lasting not more than four months to the artisans of all classes in his state. That question shows that the artisans whatever their art counted upon government help in money and materials.* Probably all higher classes of artisans required a large outlay of capital and the state considered it its duty to supply it. The system of co-operation on an extensive scale was then unknown and large capital could only be provided by the state. It was in this way as also by appointing special officers for looking to the prosperity of Varta that arts and manufactures prospered in ancient times.

The manufacture of cloth, especially silken and woollen, must have given a great impetus to the art of dyeing which we accordingly find was well developed in epic days. Almost invariably vegetable colours were used and the processes employed gave fast colours. The paintings in the Ajinta caves are supposed to have been executed by artisans brought from Persia but on what grounds it does not seem clear. The Greeks bear testimony to the skill of the Indians in dyeing and their love of wearing dyed clothes. Unfortunately the arts of dyeing and painting have now declined in India and the treatises on these arts which must have existed in ancient days are now lost to us.

It will not be out of place to see what progress was achieved in other arts and at what time. The Indian Aryans were certainly acquainted with almost all the metals and their chief properties from very

* द्रव्योपकरणं कश्चित्सर्वदा सर्वविधिनाम् ।

आहुतास्यावरं सम्यक्कृतं संश्रयच्छसि ॥ समा० ५।११८

ancient times. There is an interesting sentence in the Chhandogya Upanishad Prapathaka 4 Khanda 17, which discloses the state of knowledge of minerals in those days. 'As gold is joined by salt, silver by gold, zink by silver, lead by zink, iron by lead, wood by iron and leather by wood'* brings home to us the fact that minerals were not only extracted and worked by goldsmiths and blacksmiths but these artisans were far advanced in their respective arts. The eastern and the northern potentates presented King Yudhistihira, it is stated, with fine swords, chairs and beds decorated with gold, jewels and ivory, armours of various kinds, arms ornamented in gold, chariots drawn by well-trained horses covered with tiger-skins and arrows of different kinds and half-arrows. Swords, lances, arrows, armours, arm-plates, discs and various other weapons of offence and defence were used in epic days and they were forged by blacksmiths in this country. Steel which is called by the name of Karshnayasa or the black iron is referred to even in the Upanishads. Gold was extracted from quartz stones perhaps in some crude manner, as we are told of the fact in a simile.† It is interesting to record that gold dug out by ants and therefore called Pipilika a fact that has been recorded by almost all Greek historians

* The same or a somewhat similar idea is contained in the following shloka in the Mahabharata.

सुवर्णस्य मलं रूप्यं रूप्यस्यापि मलं त्रपु ।

ज्ञेयं त्रपुमलं सीसं सीसस्यापि मलं मलम् । उद्यो० १९ । ८१

† अप्युन्मत्तात्मलपतो बालाश्च परिजम्पतः ।

सर्वतःसारमादद्याद्विमम्य इव काञ्चनम् ॥ उद्यो० १४ । १२

is also said to have been brought by people beyond the Himalayas to Yudhishtira at the time of his imperial sacrifice. The explanation sometimes given that the Greeks had misunderstood the information given to them does not appear to be correct for the lines quoted below from the Mahabharata* show that ants actually brought out the gold from under ground. Whether these ants were as big as dogs and cats and attacked the men who went to bring the gold as stated by Greek historians is not however clear. It has now been found that on the slopes of the Himalayas towards Tibet gold was actually so far near the surface as could be found in the diggings thrown out by ants. And men had very little difficulty in separating the gold dust from the sand. The Persians are said to have received tribute from their Indian province in bags of gold dust.

Speaking of the precious metals we may state that India was the chief country in ancient times which produced gold, the precious stones and pearls. Gold was found in the Himalayas, in the rivers of Northern India and in the hilly regions of the south. We have mention of this in those interesting chapters (50 & 51) of the Sabhaparva which detail the presents brought to Yudhishtira on the occasion of his imperial sacrifice. The mountainous regions of the south also produced diamonds and other precious stones. The Chola and Pandya

* खसा पकासना ब्रह्माप्रदरा दीपिवेणवः ।

पारदाश्च कुलिदाश्च तैमणाः परतंगणाः ॥ १ ॥

तद्वै पिपीलिकं नाम उद्धतं यत्पिपीलिकैः ।

जातरूपं श्रोणमेयमहापुःपुञ्जयो नृपाः ॥ ४ ॥ स० ५२

kings brought diamonds and gold* besides fine cloth mentioned already. So also the Himalayan region produced both gold and precious stones. The king of the Pragjyotishas and other hilly kings brought ornaments made of jewels and also of gold and even silver.† Pearls were brought by the people of Ceylon‡ which, as now, produced pearls and corals and a kind of fine grass which was woven into mats. Gold and precious stones and pearls made India the coveted land of the ancients who thought that India reaped great profits from these valuable products especially pearls for which, Greek writers observe, foolish foreigners paid fancy prices.

We may now proceed to consider the art of building. In this branch probably the Indians had not made much progress during the epic days. Architecture and sculpture were probably not much known in India until the times of the Greeks. Prior to their coming the Indians usually built mud buildings and stone buildings of a primitive character only. In the Mahabharata we have a description of the construction of the combustible house built for encompassing the destruction of the Pandavas by Duryodhana and therein mud walls are said to have been built. Duryodhana in giving directions says that they were so to be built that nobody could detect that they

* मणिरत्नानि मास्यन्ति काञ्चनं सूक्ष्मवस्त्रकम् ।

चोलपाञ्चावपि द्वारं न लेभते कुपस्थितौ ॥ स० ५१ । १४

† अक्षमसारमयं मार्गं शुद्धदन्तत्सकनसिन्धु ।

प्राग्व्योतिषाविपो दत्त्वा मगदतोऽग्रजतया ॥ स० ५१ । १६

‡ समुद्रसारं वैदूर्यं मुक्तामेपास्तथैव च ।

यतयश्च कुपस्थितश्च सिंहलाः समपाहरन् ॥ स० ५२ । १५

contained lac and other combustible articles. This shows that ordinarily mud buildings were used even by princes. The great assembly hall built for the Pandavas by Maya was indeed a great achievement in architecture but the fact that Maya was its architect lends colour to the suspicion that the art of building fine buildings was best known to foreigners and notably the Greeks.

Having spoken so far of the manufactures and arts of epic India we proceed to speak of its trade. In ancient India probably the same class of persons was engaged both in the production of wealth and its exchange. It was a class which generally went by the name of Vaishyas whose business as even the Gita says was agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade. Gradually however this class subdivided and the manual labour was more and more done by the agriculturists and artisans and the higher classes of Vaishyas devoted themselves to trade only. The occupation of purchasing and selling or of transmitting goods from one place to another became gradually the occupation of the richer Vaishyas. For the latter purpose they employed the *Gomis* as they are called in the Mahabharata (the Charans or Banjaras of modern times) who kept hundreds and thousands of bullocks for transporting grain and other commodities. That was the mode of transmission of goods in good old epic days and that remained the usual mode in India through thousands of years until railways came and almost exterminated these packs of bullocks. The king is directed in the Mahabharata to treat these *Gomis* kindly and to tax them lightly. These *Gomis* were under the protection of no particular king being

always itinerant. Bred to jungle life the *Gomis* must have been a very healthy, strong and independent set of men. They were therefore often a source of trouble. In one place the Mahabharata refers to this their character and tells the king to remember that there is always danger in these *Gomis*. As a matter of fact, people who travelled by jungly routes were often attacked by these *Gomis* or Banjaras even as they are now. The dangers of transmitting goods from place to place were well recognised and are frequently spoken of in the Mahabharata. It was hence the duty of all good governments, as we have already seen, to keep the roads safe and secure.

The custom of lending money at interest is a very ancient one and was probably necessitated by the demands of trade. Those who were bold enough to undertake the perils of transporting goods from one place to another were not always men provided with money. Hence they borrowed money from money lenders at interest and paid it from the large profits they realised in their trade. The Manusmriti contains a rule that interest at more than the ordinary rate should be granted by the court where goods were taken over the sea. It follows that there was trade with countries beyond the sea and in this trade the profits were commensurate with the dangers of shipwreck or plunder and while the money lender contemplated the possibility of losing his money altogether, he was entitled to more than the ordinary rate of interest which, as we have seen, was in court one per cent. per month.

Such in brief was the industrial condition of epic India. Meagre as the details are, one can-

not but be struck by the fact that the condition was far advanced in many respects and that the state rendered substantial help to artisans and traders. There was a large external trade also by land and sea routes and this facilitated inter-communication between the different contries of Asia, a circumstance which, as we well know, helped the spread of Buddhism in that continent in the succeeding period.

CHAPTER XI.

TRADE AND INDUSTRIES.

We may conveniently notice the industrial condition of ancient India in connection with the civil administration of the state. It is surprising to find that the state took special interest in the matter and made it the concern of a special department. That pregnant question by Narada to Yudhishtira "is your Varta looked into by good men"* contains in a nutshell the duty of Government as it was then conceived to be in this connection. Varta is a word which has been lost to us in its sense of the science of livelihood. It included the principal industries of ancient India *viz.* agriculture, the breeding of cattle and sheep and manufacture. The commentator adds to this list Kusida or the lending of money at interest. Unfortunately we have lost all works on Varta and it is therefore impossible to say precisely what subjects were actually included in that branch and what was the nature and the extent of the assistance which Government officers actually rendered. The above question however is sufficient to show to us that Varta did form a part of the matters which engaged the care of Government and Narada asks Yudhishtira to see that that department was under the

* कश्चित्समुद्धिता तात वार्ता ते साधुभिर्जनैः ।

वार्तायां संश्रितस्तात लोकोप्यं सुखमेवते ॥ शी० ५ । ७९ ।

shown, no desire among the states to annihilate one another. There was no desire for the extension of territory by the absorption of neighbouring states, until we come to about the close of the epic period when political morality declined and when the example of the founding of the Persian Empire tempted strong states to imitate it. As we find from the *Digvijayas* of the Pandavas, the sole ambition usually was to establish the superiority of one people over another. When a king was conquered he was made to pay a tribute ; if slain he was replaced by his own son or other relative. Thus the permanence of each state was guaranteed though with varying fortune. This feeling was probably due to that feeling of brotherhood which animated the Aryan peoples, and identity of language and religion tended to strengthen that feeling. We see the existence of a similar feeling operating even in Greece. Although the several states fought with one another they did not try to annihilate them. The several Christian states of modern Europe are visibly actuated by the same sentiment. Portugal and Belgium small though they are, are still guaranteed continued existence by that feeling of brotherhood which animates the Christian nations of Europe though their attitude towards Turkey may be due to quite different causes.

We can thus picture to ourselves political India at the beginning of and throughout the epic period from what we see of Christian Europe at this date. The rivalries of the several states and their brotherly feeling are peculiarly conspicuous in both. The simi-

larity does not end here ; that rivalry and that brotherly feeling had developed their military organisations to a remarkable degree and had at the same time made their laws of fighting honourable and humane. This statement might perhaps seem strange but whoever has carefully gone through the Mahabharata can not but be convinced of the fact that at that remote date in India, the army had reached a very high degree of development and efficiency ; and that the Indian Aryans had come to lay down rules of fighting which can stand comparison with modern international law. The Mahabharata fight was the beginning of the decline of this high morality of the sword and by the end of the epic period it had deplorably deteriorated.

Each state had a large standing army of its own which was maintained by the king from his revenues. There were of course volunteers besides ; but the manner of fighting had so far become technical that volunteers were practically not of much use. The army was divided into four components, the foot, the horse, the elephant and the chariot. Thus there were in ancient times four arms instead of the modern three, the elephant being an arm peculiar to India. The Indian armies in ancient times were dreaded abroad chiefly because of their elephant arm. It was only the peculiar genius of Alexander which overcame that dread. But even then for a long time afterwards it still retained its importance for we note that Seleucus obtained 500 elephants from Chandragupta by the present of a daughter. Elephants again were used by the later Persian emperors in their wars with the Romans and the last notable success,

achieved by the aid of elephants was the memorable victory which Tamerlane obtained over his proud and powerful rival the Turkish Sultan Bazajat. Elephants have lost all importance in modern times owing to the use of the cannon.

The army was regularly paid, each soldier receiving some corn and some cash as pay. Narada insists on Yudhisthira's paying the soldiers their corn and cash regularly for he says "the evil consequences which result from the pay of the army being in arrears are very grave indeed."* There were units of each force for which there were separate officers; for instance there was an officer for every ten and one for every hundred and a superior officer for every one thousand.† These last officers were very highly paid and they were specially honoured by the king.‡ There was besides a commander-in-chief for the whole army among whose qualifications it is expressly stated that he should be able to bear exposure to heat, cold and rain and should be conversant with the formation of armies and the engines of destruction.§ Besides the

- * कश्चिद्भलस्य मक्तं च वेतनं च यथोचितम् ।
संप्राप्तकाले दातव्यं दादासि न विकर्षसि ॥ ४८ ॥
कालातिक्रमणादेते मक्तवेतनयोभृताः ।
मर्तुः कुर्वन्ति दौर्बल्यात्सोनयः क्षुमहान् स्मृतः ॥ ४९ ॥ समा० । ५
- † दशाधिपतयः कार्यः शताधिपतयस्तथा ।
ततः सहस्राधिपतिं कुर्याच्छ्रमेतद्व्रितम् ॥ शान्ति० १०० । ३१
- ‡ कश्चिद्भलस्य ते मुख्याः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ।
धृष्टावदाता विक्रान्ता त्वया सक्त्य गानिताः ॥ ४० ॥
- § कश्चिद्दृष्टश्च शूरश्च प्रतिमान् धृतिमान् शुचिः ।
कुलीनश्चानुरक्तश्च दक्षः सेनापतिस्तथ ॥ ४६ ॥ समा० । ५
गृह्यशास्त्राध्यायानां च तत्त्वज्ञो विक्रमान्वितः ।
वर्षशीतोष्णवर्षातानां सहिष्णुः पररन्ध्रवित् ॥ शान्ति० ८५ । ३२

four arms there were the necessary complementary departments *viz.*, transport, navy, spies and Deshikas, meaning perhaps scouts, as mentioned in the shloka quoted below.* The importance of these branches was well understood even in those times as we shall see further on. The navy probably consisted of boats in the inland countries and could only consist of ships in states on the sea-coast.

The foot usually carried a sword and a buckle. various other weapons are mentioned as carried by foot soldiers such as Prasa and Parashu, Bhindipala and Tomara, Rishti and Shula which can not all be well identified at this distance of time. The Khadga of course was a small sword. Gada or mace was a weapon which was not used by the foot generally; it was usually used in duels and in elephant fighting by particularly powerful men. The horsemen carried sword and lance. The force of 10,000 horse with which Shakuni attacked the Pandava rear in the last day's fighting is said to have fought with big Prasas,† probably lances. The charge of cavalry and the unseating of warriors, the mingling of horsemen and their trying to throw one another down by sheer force are also described in this cavalry fight.

Armours or Kavachas were worn by all men who took part in fighting, the armour or Kavacha being

* रथा नागा इयान्वेव पादाताश्चैव पाङ्खः ।

विष्टिर्नावश्चैव देशिका इति चाष्टमः ॥ शां० ५९ । ४१

† अनीके दशसाहस्रमश्वानां मत्तैर्धम ।

आसीद्वाचांरराजस्य विशालप्राचयोधिनाम् ॥ शङ्ख० २३ । ११ ।

particularly well forged in the case of the Rathis or car-warriors. Particular people were well known for particular kinds of fight. The people of the Punjab and Sindh were famous for fighting with sharp Prasas; the Ushinaras could fight well with any weapons; the Easterns were famous for fighting with elephants, the people about Mathura with naked arms while the Deccan people were known for their sword fight*

The elephant was a special arm of the Indian army. It could create great terror in the minds of men by its great size and strength as also by its being trained to obey the driver's orders and attack the enemy. The elephant had an armour to protect its head and trunk which was its most powerful limb as well as its most vulnerable part. But if elephants could be trained to attack and fight, men could be trained to confront and even to fight with them with no other weapons but their naked arms. Such a fight is described in Dronaparva Chap. 26 where Bhima gets under the belly of the elephant of Bhagadatta and makes it whirl round and round by the skilful application of his hands. Feats like these are not impossible and may be sometimes witnessed in Native States even at the present day. The elephant usually had his driver and his rider or warrior who provided himself usually with darts which he hurled with force against the enemy from a great distance. The elephant army was not always however invulnerable. If the first brunt of an

* गांधाराः सिंधुसौवीरा नरवरप्रासयोधिनः ।
सर्वशस्त्रेषु कुशलाः सत्त्वर्त उशीनराः ।
प्राच्या मातंगयुद्धेषु कुशलाः कूटयोधिनः ॥ ४ ॥
दक्षिणात्यासिपाणयः ॥ श्लो ६

attack by the force could be sustained and man and horse trained to wage a running fight with it an elephant force could be annihilated. Alexander first directed his light infantry to ply their darts with which they easily killed the drivers and even the riders as they offered a conspicuous target. With long axes infantry men also hacked the legs of the elephants and with specially made curved swords called choppers their trunks were also often cut off. The elephants when once taken by terror turned round on their side and trampled their own men under their feet. Similar scenes are constantly described in the Mahabharata and an elephant force, though very terrible and destructive in the beginning, if met with courage and tact became often disastrous to its own side in the end.

The greatest warrior of epic days was however the car-warrior. It is impossible for modern people to have an accurate idea of the manner of fighting of these warriors and their power of dealing death. In ancient days the bow and the arrow were the chief weapons of destruction as it enabled the fighter to destroy his enemy from a distance. A javelin or a Shakti as it was called could go far enough if propelled by a powerful hand and the Chakra or disc was an equally powerful weapon. But the advantage of the bow and the arrow lay in the fact that the fighter could throw it at a greater distance than either of these weapons could go and could take with him more arrows than he could take javelins or discs. Consequently the Indians practised archery beyond every other mode of fighting and developed it far beyond other nations. The Indian bow as even the

Greeks testify was as long as a man's height and the Indians used an arrow which was three cubits in length with a heavy point. It required a powerful man to practise with such a bow. Although the practice at the bow had declined by the end of the epic period, even at that time the Greeks were struck with wonder at the force with which an Indian arrow was thrown and Greek writers testify to the fact that such an arrow could pierce iron plates of great thickness. In fact Indian archery commanded the admiration of the world down to the days of Prithviraj who was the last representative of the powerful archers of ancient India.

To use a long bow and to propel heavy arrows required great physical strength, but to secure unerring aim required constant practice. As to use the gun and the bullet which have in modern times supplanted the bow and the arrow, natural aptitude is a *sine que non* so in archery too it was not every body who could be a great archer. But natural aptitude required to be supplemented by constant practice. The practice which Arjuna is said to have had as a pupil under Drona was long and arduous, and it is stated that he used to practise even at night.* The object of such practice was to secure unerring aim as well as rapidity of throw. The archer was also expected to practise in all sorts of positions. By the constant use of the bow the left arm of Arjuna was said to have had a tumour grown upon it which he concealed by wearing armlets when he disguised himself as a eunuch.

* तदभ्यासकृतं मत्वा राज्ञापि स पाण्डवः ।

योग्या चक्रे महाबाहुर्धनुषा पाण्डुनन्दनः ॥ आ० १११ । २५

The efficiency of the archer was heightened by the use of the chariot. The archer on foot could carry only a man's load of arrows and could not easily change his place of vantage. The car was added to give him swift motion from place to place as well as to enable him to carry larger ammunition of fighting. The motion of the car however required greater aim and the horses and the driver were exposed to attack. The car warrior had therefore greater cares commensurate with his greater powers. The car contingent to our view fulfilled the same purpose in ancient Indian warfare as artillery does now. A skilful handling of the cars would enable the enemy's force to be harassed from a distance and from different points of vantage. Like artillery they were however required to be supplied with ammunition. In the Karna Parva Ashvatthama directs seven cart loads of arrows to follow him during the fight. Again Ashvatthama is said to have discharged within three hours missiles carried in eight cars each drawn by eight bullocks. This clearly shows that ammunition was regularly required by and had to be supplied to the car-warriors as to modern artillery. The need of transport in ancient times was therefore as great as it is now.

The reader might perhaps be here curious to know what Astras were which were used by car warriors and which made them all the more formidable. Astras as the many vivid descriptions in the Mahabharata show were superhuman missiles which by producing fire, rain, or wind or in any other manner wrought terrible destruction on the enemy. They were however nothing but arrows shot by the car-

warriors. No other earthly missile than an arrow is shown as having been used as an Astra. The skill of the archer was therefore there and what he did was to recite some Mantras which are said to have been contained in the Dhanurveda and to invest the arrow he was using with particular supernatural power. The use of the Astra had four parts in its process *viz.*, Mantra, Upachara, Prayoga and Sanhâra. The last part shows that the man who used an Astra could recall its action. Besides practice at the bow a Kshatriya was expected to learn the Dhanurveda which contained the knowledge of these Astras and to learn the methods of using them. Narada in one of his questions† asks Yudhisthira if the Dhanurveda Sutra was studied in his house. The Astra whether real or imaginary had, however, according to the rules of Dharmayuddha or righteous fighting, only to be used against those who knew the use of Astras. It is only on one occasion when Drona is exasperated by the taunts of Duryodhana that he uses Astras, according to his own statement, against those who were ignorant of them‡. These divine weapons were thus not used ordinarily and we may therefore conveniently take it that for all practical purposes they did not exist.

The description of battles as given graphically in the Mahabharata becomes obscure when these Astras

* See commentary on योजनं चतुष्पात्युनरेव चक्रे । उद्यो० ३. ॥ ३

† कश्चिदम्यस्यते सम्यक् ग्रहे ते भरतर्षभ ।

अनुर्वेदस्य सूत्रं वै यंत्रसूत्रं च नाग्रम् ॥ स० ५ । ११

‡ See also ब्रह्मणेन त्वया दग्धा अनज्ज्ञा मरा मुनि ।

यदेतदीदृशं कर्म कृतं विप्र न साधु तद् ॥ श्लो० १९० । ३९

are mentioned as being used and readers often imagine these descriptions of battles as incapable of historical study. It is impossible for us accustomed as we are to descriptions of battles fought with the gun and the cannon, to have a proper idea of fighting when cars were used. But the car-warrior was not an imaginary being. He was a prominent factor in the armies of all ancient peoples, of the Assyrians, the Egyptians and even the Greeks of Homeric days. The car-warrior remained in India an important arm of the fighting machine down to the days of the Greeks. In the great battle fought on the banks of the Hydaspes, the cars formed a principal contingent of the army of Porus and their manner of fighting and their eventual discomfiture are graphically described by Curtius Rufus.

It would not be uninteresting if we quote that description as it will enable the reader to conceive how car-warriors fought in later days. "Soon after when the sky had become clearer and showed the ranks to be those of the enemy he (Porus) sent 100 chariots and 4000 horse to obstruct their advance. The main strength of this detachment lay in the chariots each of which was drawn by four horses and carried six men, of whom two were shield bearers, two archers posted on each side of the chariot and the other two charioteers as well as men at arms; for when the fighting was at close quarters, they dropped their reins and hurled dart after dart against the enemy.*"

* This description of a chariot's accountrement differs somewhat from the description which can be gathered from the Mahabharata. There was only one archer in the chariot and only one charioteer

“But on this particular day these chariots proved to be scarcely of any service, for the storm of rain which as already said, was of extraordinary violence had made the ground slippery and unfit for horses to ride over, while the chariots kept sticking in the muddy sloughs formed by the rain and proved almost immovable from their great weight. Alexander, on the other hand, charged with the utmost vigour, because his troops were lightly armed and unencumbered. The Scythians and Dahae first of all attacked the Indians and then the king launched Perdiccas with his horse upon their right wing. The fighting had now become hot every where when the drivers of the chariots rode at full speed into the midst of the battle thinking they would thus most effectively succour their friends. It would be hard to say which side suffered most from this charge ; for the Macedonian foot soldiers who were exposed to the first shock of the onset were trampled down, while the charioteers were hurled down from their seats when the chariots in rushing into action jolted over broken and slippery ground. Some again of the horses took fright and precipitated the carriages not only into sloughs and pools of water, but even into the river itself. A few which were driven off the field by the darts of the enemy

who did not fight. There are sometimes mentioned two other warriors who accompany a chariot and who are called Chakrarakshas. Their duty probably was to protect the flanks and it is mentioned that they followed riding in different chariots. When Arjuna goes to kill Jayadratha he has for his Chakrarakshas the sons of Panchali who were prevented however from following him, by the enemy.

made their way to Porus who was making most energetic preparations for the onset."*

From the above description it will clearly appear that the cars had ceased to be carefully handled and the manner of fighting had deteriorated by the end of the epic period. Irrespective of remarks to be found in particular passages, the Shantiparva chapt. 100 contains specific injunctions as to what seasons and what grounds were specially to be preferred for the several arms. "A force chiefly composed of the foot was always looked upon as a strong one. Cavalry and chariots were useful in the dry season and on dry and pitless ground†" a direction which Porus did not attend to or did not know at all when he handled his army; for we must remember that the battle of the Hydaspes was fought in the rainy season and the chariots were operating in an uneven and ditchy ground. Elephants and men were useful in a ground and at a time like this as also in attacking forts and inaccessible places. These directions in the Mahabharata and the descriptions of battles where Astras and duels are not introduced clearly

* The manner of fighting here described is also different from that to be found in the Mahabharata. The chariots were probably not used for delivering a charge wherein they could not have had room for free motion. The driver of the chariot was also required to be an expert person so that he could avoid jolting and precipitate running like the above. But this thing frequently happened in the Mahabharata fight also and Karna's death was due to such an accident, a wheel of his chariot having got into a ditch.

† अपंका गर्तरहिता रथमग्निः प्रशस्यते ।

रथाश्च बहुला सेना सुदिनैषु प्रशस्यते ॥ १४

पदातिनागबहुला प्रावृद्धकाले प्रशस्यते ।

गुणानेतान् प्रसंख्याप्य देशकालौ प्रयोजयेत् ॥ २५ सा० १०००

show that the author or authors of the Mahabharata were not unacquainted with actual fighting.

Speaking of duels which take place every now and then in the Mahabharata as the fighting goes on, we are not disposed to look upon them as wholly imaginary. It is not impossible that even in the hand-to-hand fighting that is going on, the fighters may sometimes cease fighting and look on a duel between two important personages especially at a time when the rules of Dharmayuddha or righteous fighting required that more than one man should not attack one individual. Duels may go on even while fighting is taking place at other places. The Mahabharata contains innumerable descriptions of these duels. In fact the fighting except on the last day always resolved itself into duels, foot with foot, mace fighters with mace fighters, elephants with elephants and chariotmen with chariotmen. The leaders are all car-warriors and they fight duels called *दैत्य* which are watched with intense interest by other fighters standing as onlookers.

The chariot deserves to be more fully described. It was always a four wheeled construction and four horses were usually yoked to it. The warriors took great delight in decorating their chariots according to their likings and affluence and the horses and their trappings were usually superb. The chariots had a circular dome and over it a Dhvaja of different devices which distinguished each warrior and a banner. The chariots, the horses, their gold and emerald trappings, the different Dhvajas are beautifully described in Drona Parva Chapter 23. In fight the Dhvaja was often attempted to be thrown down by

an arrow in order to humble the opponent. Curiously enough each chariot had a drum of its own which gave out some warlike music. There were even Mridangas which were beaten automatically by some mechanical construction as the chariot moved.* This seems strange and we are informed that the warriors usually fought to the music of drums and Mridangas. But the importance of warlike music will be understood when we remember that a piper who, though wounded himself, kept on piping in the last north-west frontier war kept up the spirit of the advancing party of Highlanders as they scaled the mountain in face of a determined enemy. The chariots were always spacious; they are sometimes described as Nagarakara, an epithet which can not well be understood. They were furnished with arrows and other weapons for use in case of need. The arrows stored were of different kinds some so small as to be only a span in length, to be used when the opponent was very near, some with crooked points, others with poisoned points. It speaks volumes in favour of the advanced state of civilization or at least morals of that time that poisoned arrows were prohibited by the rules of righteous fighting. We are reminded here of the rule of modern civilised warfare which interdicts the use of expanding bullets in wars between Europeans. What the bullet now is, the arrow was in ancient epic India. It had reached nearly the same development and the obligations of humanity were recognized even then.

It may seem incredulous but the Mahabharata

* मृदंगी चात्र विपुलौ दिव्यौ मंदोपनंदनौ ।

येत्रणाह्वयमानौ च सुस्वनी हर्षवर्धनौ ॥ द्रो० ११० ५

speaks of several kinds of motion and force which could be imparted to an arrow. Skill in archery had so far advanced that the arrow could go straight, zig-zag or in a circle. It could be sent with such force that it could cut the throat and throw off the head of the opponent. This was its highest force called the last of the 10 motions which could be imparted to it.*

Besides the driver or Sārathi every chariot or important chariot had two persons to protect the wheels of the chariot. These were called the Chakra-rakshas. What their duty was it is difficult to see; but perhaps they prevented a flank attack on the car warrior while he was engaged in plying his bow in front. The chariot had its two sides open, the back alone being closed completely. It was usual for the charioteer to challenge his opponent by name and to let him know his own name and family name and "names and family names were heard," observes the poet in one place, "on the battle field, as in the Svayamvara hall."† The fighters especially the car-warriors may well be imagined also to exchange sharp words before commencing attack or in the intervals of fighting, if we remember that in those days the parties opposed could not have been at a great distance from each other. Even if their conversations are imaginery war cries were certainly indulged in largely as they are now, in order to raise the spirit of

* See commentary on.

गत्यादयस्या संयुक्तान् अश्वत्थामात्यवासजत् ॥ कर्ण० २९ । २९

† शुश्रुभुः नाम गोत्राणि वीराणां संयुगे तदा ।

द्रोणे मद्रवता राजन् स्वयं वर इवाहवे ॥ द्रोण० २१ । ५८

the warriors and to strike terror in the hearts of the opponents. The blowing of the conch was also a favourite mode of raising the spirits with car-warriors. The sound of the conch is undoubtedly very stirring and conches could only be blown by men with powerful chests.

We have so far tried to accord concrete historical shape to the most important arm of epic days, *viz.*, the chariot. We have also tried to realise how the chariot, the elephant, the horseman and the foot-soldier fought; it only remains to consider the Vyuha. The Vyuha was the arrangement of the forces which the commander adopted at the time of battle. It needs no imagination to conceive that this arrangement must have been of various kinds. In fact the skill of the commander lies in the disposal of his forces. The Mahabharata speaks of different kinds of Vyuhās often named after birds, the word wings used as well in the Mahabharata as in modern warfare, suggesting the idea. The most interesting of these Vyuhās mentioned in the Mahabharata is the Chakra Vyuha which Drona had adopted when Abhimanyu was killed. It was a kind of circular arrangement of forces open at one point only. It is not stated anywhere how the forces were actually disposed on that day. Probably the treatises of Brihaspati and Shukra contained chapters on the different formations of armies on the battle-field. In chapter 99 of the Shantiparva the following arrangement *viz.*, elephants outside, chariots inside, cavalry inside chariots and the infantry in the centre is said to be a very effective arrangement. It seems probable that by and by the infantry sought

protection from elephants and chariots which perhaps were in that case more harmful than otherwise. The disposal of his army by Porus was somewhat similar and Greek writers have pointed out the defects of it. Whatever the disposal of the army at the beginning of a fight it does not appear that there was any conscious attempt to change the formation thereafter as circumstances required. The army in action could not have been handled by the commander-in-chief effectually nor do the description of battles in the Mahabharata show any such attempt.

We have no hints in the various descriptions of these fightings in the Mahabharata whether the strategy of war was understood in epic days. The Mahabharata fight was more a pitched battle than a war. But we have not the slightest doubt that both in battles and in war righteous fighting was the glory of the Indian Kshatriyas. As Bhishma said ; " he did not like to strike a man who had laid down his arms, or who had fallen, or whose armour was unbuckled, or who was running away from fight, or who tendered submission or whose son had been killed or who was a man of humble position.* So also it is laid down that men asleep or thirsty or tired or dispersed should not be killed nor at the time of their unbuckling or starting or drinking or eating or when engaged in bringing grass etc. Even the Greeks were

- * निक्षिप्तरात्रौ पतिते विमुक्तकवचपञ्चजे ।
 ब्रह्ममाणे च मीते च तव चास्मीति वादिनि ।
 क्षिप्यां क्षीनाग्नेष्वे च विकले चैकग्रुहिणि ।
 अग्ररास्ते नरे चैव न युद्धं रोचते मम ॥ मीमं०

struck with admiration at the righteous fighting of the Indians who never disturbed the tiller of the soil or devastated the crops. "While fighting is going on the agriculturists securely follow their own operations." These rules and facts appear in strange contrast with other rules laid down for laying waste the country of the enemy or one's own country to prevent attack.

In chapter 69 of the *Shantiparva* we have a graphic description of what a defeated king should do to defend himself. He should retire to his chief fortress and remove his cattle from the jungle and keep them on the highways. He should lay his own country waste and remove all the villagers to the important towns. Rich men should be removed to fortified places which should have garrisons from the army. What can not be removed should be burned including grass. Bridges and passages of rivers should also be destroyed. All accumulated water should be let loose and such as can not be let loose should be vitiated by poison. All small jungle about the fort should be cut down and of large and tall trees the branches should be lopped off but no tree belonging to a temple should be touched. On the forts *Pragandis* and *Akashajananis** should be constructed while the moats should be filled up and provided with concealed spikes and crocodiles. There should be secret gates for egress from the town to be used

* What these were it is difficult to say. The commentator who lived after the invention of gunpowder explains them as the holes in the fortifications through which bullets could be discharged. The Bengalees explain *Pragandis* to mean places from which persons at a distance could be seen.

in case of necessity. At the fort gates engines should be constructed and Shataghnis* placed upon these and kept in hand. Fuel should be collected, new wells dug, and old wells cleared; huts covered with grass should be smeared with mud. Food should be prepared at night. All fires should be stopped except the sacrificial fire; for the protection of the city it should be notified through criers that he who lits fire by day would be punished severely. All beggars, cartmen, eunuchs, madmen and dancers should be turned out of the town as they are very dangerous. Spies should be kept in the principal thoroughfares, in holy places and in places of general resort. Arsenals, armouries, elephant and horse stables should not be allowed to be visited by anybody. Materials should be collected such as oil, fat, honey, butter, medicine, grass, Palasha, fuel and poisoned arrows.

The destruction of the country by fire or the poisoning of drinking water or the maddening of the elephants of the enemy, the harassing of the enemy's country by jungly dacoits or even the cutting down of crops and trees† are also herein recommended. Perhaps these and other devices were adopted after

* What Shataghnis really were can not similarly be guessed. They were not cannons assuredly. They might have been catapults to throw stones. Soldiers are sometimes represented as carrying them in their hands.

† चोरैराटविकेभ्यः परराष्ट्रस्य पीडनम् ।

अग्निदेगैर्देभ्यः प्रतिकूपककारकैः ॥ ८९ ॥

श्रेणिमुख्योपजापेन वीरुधच्छेदनेन च ।

दूषणेन च नागानामातकजननेन च ।

आराधनेन भक्तस्य प्रत्ययोपार्जनेन च ॥ ९० शा० ५९

the invasion of India by Alexander; for the Greek historians of Alexander bear testimony to the magnanimous rules of fighting observed by the Indians. It seems therefore not unnatural to conclude that the maxim "everything is fair in war" was taught by the Greeks to the Indians. Alexander's campaign in the Punjab was undoubtedly carried on in a manner far different from that of the Indians; and the Indians were not averse to take a lesson from that great master in the art and practices of war.

But if the Indians can be said to have borrowed their evil practices in war from the Greeks, their Machiavellian principles in politics and their tendency to treachery they owed to themselves. It is possible that in the beginning of the epic period the Indians were more honest and honourable in their political conduct. The great heroes ranged on the side of Duryodhana knew that their master was engaged in an iniquitous war, but they still fought on his side and laid down their lives for him because they felt it was their duty to do so; for as Bhishma said they had eaten his bread. The scene wherein Krishna attempts to seduce Karna has, as we have said in our work on the Mahabharata, been subsequently introduced by Sauti, to illustrate the then accepted principle of employing Bheda or defection but even then Karna remains firm and the honourable man refuses even the offer of being made emperor as the eldest brother of the Pandavas. These examples of the heroes of the great war are refreshing but it is sickening to find how in the Rajadharma principles laid down in the Shantiparva, Bheda is constantly preached as a great weapon to conquer the enemy.

And it must have been often successfully employed as the despotic nature of government always gave rise to discontent among the officers of the state and these discontented officers were always ready to serve the enemy for purposes of revenge. Ambition also must have played its own part in these defections. But these feelings found a scope because there were no contrary feelings to restrain them. The idea that the state or government is one's own was never fostered in India even if it be granted that it did exist at any time. The true principles and foundations of government were never grasped or elucidated by thinkers. Political science was the only one which was conspicuous by its absence in the great arena of thought in which the Indo-Aryan intellect roamed and soared. The institution of caste growing steadily in exclusiveness led the common people to believe that government was the business of the Kshatriyas alone and was no concern of theirs; that they might as well obey one king as another, so long as peace and industry were secured. The state gradually came to be looked upon as the private property of the king and the absence of all higher political virtues and feelings caused by these circumstances left the lower passions uncontrolled and the result was that Bheda or treachery occupies a prominent place in the politics of India whether ancient or modern.

The king had not only thus to watch the doings and the tempers of the officers of a rival state but had for the same reason to watch carefully his own officers. Narada in the very interesting Kachchit chapter which, as we have shown, mostly represents the state of politics and government at the end of

the epic period, gives directions on both points. He asks Yudhisthira if he fails to send concealed presents of jewels to the officers of a rival state* or to keep three spies ignorant of one another's deputation on the same duty, to watch the conduct of his own officers with the exception of three *viz.*, the chief minister, the crown prince and the Purohita or family priest. Probably these he watched himself as it would not have suited their position to be watched by spies, not that they were incapable of being tampered with. On the contrary the minister and the crown prince were the most dangerous of his subordinates and required to be carefully watched; and this the king did himself. As the life of a king is on the whole depicted in this connection in the Mahabharata it is indeed a miserable one. He is asked not to trust his own wives, his sons, his family priest, his ministers, and his commander-in-chief. A king who was in constant danger from all these quarters must indeed have led an unenviable life, and such indeed has actually been the lot of Indian princes with the exception of men of strong personal character ever since epic days.

The despotic power of kings and the Machiavellian policy by which that power was required to be supported, acquired their highest expression in the days of Chandragupta and his Brahmin minister Chanakya. There is a treatise on Niti or politics which bears Chanakya's name and which may possibly have been written by him. The Mudra-

* कश्चिन् बलमुद्यमेभ्यः परराष्ट्रे परतप ।

उपच्छन्नानि रत्नानि प्रयच्छसि यथाहंतः ॥ ४० । ५ । ५९

rakshasa which takes Chandragupta and Chanakya as its heroes clearly exhibits to what pitiable condition the state of politics had been reduced at that time and how every thing had become fair in politics as in war and kingdoms were for those who were strong as well in guilt as in arms. The Mricchakatika also discloses a similarly low state of political morality. These dramas written about events happening at about the time when Plato and Aristotle were writing their masterly treatises on politics and government show how vastly the Indo-Aryan and the Greek civilizations starting from a common point had diverged in the matter of political development by the end of the epic period in India.

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